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The Social Construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing Experience

A Study of the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms
Programme

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

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Abstract

This thesis investigates an increasingly popular but little researched tourism-related phenomenon: the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) programme (Deville, Wearing, & McDonald, 2016a). The programme has been framed as an alternative form of tourism (McIntosh, 2009; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) that networks people interested in participating in sustainable lifestyles on organic farms. Farm hosts offer food, shelter, and an opportunity to engage in and learn about the work of farming, while volunteers receive free food and accommodation. WWOOFing emerged in the UK in the 1970s and, since then, has become entwined with practices of international travelling worldwide. New Zealand hosts the second oldest and the second largest WWOOF network globally. According to the WWOOF founder Sue Coppard, the primary aim of WWOOFing is to create a cultural exchange and to develop knowledge and learning while working together on the farm for four- six hours per day (Pier, 2011). Arguably, its underlying distinctive values and philosophies shape the experience and host-guest relationship between WWOOF farm hosts and their volunteers, known as WWOOFers. The aim of this thesis is to examine the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience between farmers and WWOOFers in the WWOOF volunteer exchange programme.

The methodological approach adopted in this study is underpinned by social constructionist epistemology. Thus, the nature of this thesis is qualitative and inductive and draws on creative data approaches. To explore the socially constructed experience between farmers and WWOOFers, a blend of qualitative methods for data collection and analysis was chosen. The data were collected in the form of qualitative unstructured interviews with 23 farmers and WWOOFers, three creative LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) workshops with 12 participants, combined with participant observation and my reflexive research journal.

Based on the constructionist approach, the study found that farm hosts and WWOOFers socially construct the New Zealand WWOOFing experience through being involved in 'dirty activities', crossing various thresholds, and striving for personal ideals. These three key themes were evident in the participants' accounts and actions. Additionally, the LSP methodology helped to understand the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience, which is based on people involved in sharing of the work, food, social time and rules. Not so ideal, the results also revealed a lack of ethical accountability within WWOOFing.

The findings contribute to developments in tourism studies knowledge such as greater understanding of the social construction of tourists' experiences and how networks like WWOOF can achieve greater understanding in the exchanges between hosts and guests. It also makes a contribution by investigating the ideals communicated and experienced in this type of tourism. This thesis highlights the need for further critical thought on the nature of volunteer programmes like WWOOFing and deeper understandings of the interactions between WWOOF farmers and volunteers. Specifically, this thesis highlights the need to examine the interactions between WWOOF farmers and volunteers, as these are open to interpretation and possibly negotiation due to communication around ideals and expectations in WWOOFing being neglected. Later research can build on these findings to improve knowledge, experience, and practice in this area.

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Glossary

The following terms and colloquial language were used by participants in this research.

Airbnb	A platform which provides residential homestays for travellers who seek contact and interactions with individuals in host communities. www.airbnb.com
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CouchSurfing	A travel community aimed at providing a platform for members to 'surf' on couches by staying as a guest at a host's home for free. www.couchsurfing.com
CTS	Critical Tourism Studies
FoWO	Federation of WWOOF Organisations
Help-X	Volunteer exchange tourism programme www.helpx.net/nz
IWA	International WWOOF Association
LSP	LEGO® Serious Play®
UNWTO	UN World Tourism Organization
WWOOF	Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms
woof (verb)	A verb which means to volunteer on a WWOOF farm.
WWOOFer	A person who volunteers on a WWOOF farm.
WWOOF host	A farmer who offers a volunteering opportunity on a WWOOF farm.

Proem “The Soul Lies in Soil”

To begin, I would like to present a narrative about soil recounted to me by one of the research participants. When I arrived at one farm, the hosts gave me a short tour around it. The tour had to be short as this was a vast commercial organic farm situated on several hundred hectares of land. The owner of the farm, Anthony, told me the story of how he had converted his conventional farm, which was home to around 4000 sheep, to organics. Anthony had operated as a large-scale conventional farmer for decades, but had changed his operation after attending a farming seminar about 10 years previously. At this seminar, Anthony was introduced to biodynamic¹ and organic farming principles. Anthony said that he became converted over the weekend.

He decided to study organic practices and change his farm. Anthony said that everything is a cycle and the key to prosperity is the nutrition of the soil. He said that in order to grow healthy animals a farmer needs healthy grass. In turn, to grow healthy grass the soil needs to be healthy too. Anthony described changing from conventional to organic farming as challenging and time-consuming. The process of obtaining organic certification took Anthony several years. To convert his conventional farm to an organic one, Anthony followed three steps:

1. Collecting information
2. Trying various practices on a small scale
3. Implementing successful organic practices on the entire farm.

Once Anthony had gained skills and confidence in working according to organic farming principles, he redesigned the whole farm and its operation according to New Zealand’s organic farming standard: BioGro².

After some time, Anthony noticed that not only had the farm changed, but that he had changed too. He became passionate about nutrition and improving the soil health. Fertile soil provided a foundation for healthier crops and animals. Anthony also increased the biodiversity on the farm, which helped him to keep the livestock healthy. After several years of study and hands-on practice,

¹ Biodynamic agriculture is an alternative concept of organic farming which embraces the esoteric concepts drawn from the ideas of Rudolph Steiner. Biodynamic agriculture is focused on the harmonised interrelationships of humans, nature, and the universe (Alec & Alec, 2015).

² The BioGro label is one of the leading organic certification labels in New Zealand. It was established in 1983 and currently certifies nearly 600 New Zealand producers. BioGro certification is accredited by the International Organic Accreditation Service (BioGro, 2016).

Anthony has accumulated vast knowledge about nutrition. He believes that an organic-centred worldview and alternative farm management practices have boosted not only his farm's performance, but also his health and so enabled him to recover from a severe back injury.

During dinner conversations, Anthony and his partner Alice mentioned that they saw health improvements in many of their WWOOFers. Quite often, they were able to help some of the WWOOFers with nutrition problems like intolerances or allergies or just introduce them to nutritious and delicious meals they had not tried before. Anthony and Alice believe that having a rural lifestyle in a flourishing and healthy environment helps people to improve their health. They observed that engaging in physical outdoor farm work supplemented with a diversified and nutritious food enabled some WWOOFers to improve their health and strength. At the end of 2016, Anthony sold his large-scale farm and bought a smaller property. He describes his new property as a healthy and happy home on 10 acres in the countryside. Anthony and his partner Alice are studying nutrition and health coaching with the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. During my stay on their farm, Anthony and Alice repeated the phrase 'the soul lies in soil'. They emphasised that healthy soil is the most valuable asset as it provides nutritious food for plants, animals, and people. This phrase became important for the essence of my research thesis as following pages will present.

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis seeks a better understanding of the tourism-related phenomenon of the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) movement. The key aim of this thesis was to explore the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Although the WWOOF movement is a part of the tourism industry (Deville, Wearing, & McDonald, 2016b; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; Miller & Mair, 2015a), all interactions between local farmers and tourists, commonly referenced as to 'WWOOFers', are usually transacted on a non-monetary basis. However, as a sign of appreciation and gratitude for the work a WWOOFer has done, farmers may occasionally give a present or offer to pay for a WWOOFer's bus ticket to the next farm. Despite the fact that over the last 40 years WWOOFing has become an increasingly popular way to travel, in academia this tourism phenomenon has remained largely neglected until recently.

Some researchers have indicated that the growing popularity of the WWOOF programme lies in the fact that it offers an alternative form of travel, because the concept of exchanging voluntary work for food and accommodation is a part of a global trend in contemporary societies where slow food, sustainability, and back-to-the-land movements have gained popularity (Deville et al., 2016b; Kosnik, 2014; Wilbur, 2012). An increasing number of travellers around the world seek alternative personalised ways of travelling, unusual destinations, and deeper interactions with locals. For example, the 2015 Good Travels survey by Tourism Cares reports that 55% of respondents (1405 respondents) volunteered in a destination they had visited in the last two years (Tourism Cares, 2015). Additionally, getting authentic tourists' experiences and 'living like a local' has become an essential part of holiday for many travellers (ATBA, 2015). Since the 2000s, volunteers exchange programmes like WWOOFing, CouchSurfing and HelpX and commercial services like Airbnb and house swapping schemes have increased in popularity because tourists are keen to engage in interactions with locals (Chen, 2012; Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015; Ert, Fleischer, & Magen, 2016; Geiger & Germelmann, 2015; Varma, Jukic, Pestek, Shultz, & Nestorov, 2016).

Tourism studies has traditionally neglected alternative exchange programmes based on non-monetary exchange. The World Wide Opportunities on Organic farms movement represents one of these non-monetary tourism exchange programmes. Yet, WWOOFing is a popular travel alternative that appeals to

young people with distinct environmental ideals, and who crave freedom and greater flexibility while engaging in interactions with local culture and enjoying an off-the-beaten-track tourist experience (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2001; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; Stehlik, 2002). These travellers often see the WWOOF programme as an accessible and inexpensive way of travel (Barrett, 2004).

In many countries, the majority of WWOOFers are young people travelling overseas during their gap year. The choice of country is partly explained by legal visa requirements and labour regulations for volunteer work. For example, to volunteer in New Zealand people need an unrestricted work visa which does not specify an employer, occupation or region. Additionally, a volunteer should not receive any financial gain or reward for the volunteer work, for example, accommodation (board or lodging); goods, such as food or clothing; services, such as transport; nor work experience or training (Immigration New Zealand, 2016a). Thus, according to Immigration New Zealand, WWOOFing is considered paid work, as WWOOF volunteers receive food and accommodation.

Most WWOOFers come to New Zealand on a working holiday visa (K. Millener, personal communication, 2016). New Zealand working holiday visas are available to young people, usually 18-30 year-olds. With this kind of visa, people can travel and work in New Zealand for up to 12 months. Additionally, this type of visa arrangement is currently limited to 43 countries. To apply for a working holiday visa, New Zealand Immigration requires volunteers to have a return ticket (or enough money to pay for one). The applicant's main intention should be to travel around New Zealand, with work being a secondary intention (Immigration New Zealand, 2016a). Hence, these limitations make WWOOFing in New Zealand neither inclusive or affordable.

Previous research suggests that the experiences between volunteer tourists and their hosts are perceived as mutually beneficial and more meaningful compared to other mainstream forms of tourism (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007). My encounters with the academic literature related to the WWOOFing phenomenon (Bernkopf, 2009; Malec, 2014; Pier, 2011), however, convinced me that the underlying values of the WWOOF movement had been ignored. Since the foundation of the movement, WWOOFing participants embraced distinct values and philosophies which shape the experiences and host-guest interactions between WWOOF farmers and their tourists or WWOOF volunteers.

This thesis introduces the reader to the worldviews and experiences of WWOOFing participants and the reality which is socially constructed by WWOOF farmers and WWOOF volunteers. To explore the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience, I chose to become a WWOOF participant myself. Prior to starting the thesis, I did not have any farming experience nor was I involved in the WWOOFing movement. I come from an urban background; I have lots of outdoor experience as a scout, and I am not afraid of work and challenges.

My interest in this topic came from my personal interest and experiences in alternative travelling. I was also influenced through reviewing the literature, engaging with critical approaches to tourism research, and conversations with my supervisors, one of whom pioneered research on the WWOOF movement. In the process of producing this thesis, I spent about six months volunteering on New Zealand farms. I have also visited a variety of farms both in New Zealand's North and South islands. Farms that participated in this research include a small garden dwelling, commercial farms, and alternative or community farms. Additionally, during my PhD research, I gained WWOOFing experience in Scotland while I was visiting my supervisor Professor Alison Phipps at the University of Glasgow. In addition, I got more WWOOFing experience on a remote farm in Nepal when I was visiting the University of Kathmandu.

During the data collection phase on New Zealand WWOOF farms, I was both a WWOOFer and a researcher at the research sites. By placing myself in my yellow gumboots as one of the WWOOF volunteers on New Zealand farms, I was involved in the same activities as other participants in this research. As a WWOOF volunteer, I experienced the same arrangements as other WWOOFers on the farms in terms of work, accommodation, or social interactions. Due to the rich encounters and experiences I had, I was able to gain deeper insights into the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. To enhance the understanding of the participants' experiences I applied a creative and innovative tool for data collection called LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP), which is further described in Chapter 3. LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a co-creative tool built on the social constructionist foundation and treats participants not as a source of the data but as co-creators in the research process. I believe that those background insights, my experiences and methods used in this study enhanced my understanding of the social construction of the WWOOFing phenomenon.

1.1 What is the WWOOF Movement All About?

World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) is a global exchange programme which connects volunteers (WWOOFers) with organic farmers to support cultural and educational experiences based on trust and nonfinancial exchange, thereby helping to build a sustainable, global community (Federation of WWOOF Organisations, 2016). WWOOF originated in the UK in 1971 with organic movement activists who wanted an escape from an urban setting and to support organic farmers (Coppard, 2012). The programme called then Working Weekends on Organic Farms. The programme founder, Sue Coppard, remembers that her initial goal was to get into the countryside during weekends in an affordable and meaningful way and with good company (Pier, 2011). Early adherents of WWOOF believe that the WWOOFing offers a win-win exchange: WWOOFers nourish themselves by spending active time outdoors and eat good food and help the farmers to sustain organic principles, thus helping the planet. Over four decades the WWOOF programme has become a popular way to travel and it has grown and flourished in more than 100 countries (Petropoulos, 2015).

In its four decade history, the WWOOF programme has been renamed twice. As recalled by the WWOOFing founder, Sue Coppard, in the 1980s, WWOOF Australia and New Zealand changed the meaning to Willing Workers on Organic Farms. This decision was based on the remote location of Australia and New Zealand which meant that volunteers were coming not just for the weekends. Shortly after, the WWOOF UK followed the change for the same reason (Kosnik, 2013). This name remained with the programme for twenty years until the second change was done during the first international WWOOF conference in England. In 2001 the conference delegates, who were represented by the national WWOOF coordinators decided to keep the acronym but change the meaning for 'World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms' (Braid, 2001). This change was done due to the coordinators' concern with the work and immigration legislation in several countries and the word 'worker' was dropped. The new name reflected the internationality and the non-monetary nature of the WWOOF exchange and helped to distance WWOOFing from the possible perception that this programme facilitates the recruitment of cheap labour on farms. But as noted by Kosnik (2013), the change did not have an influence on immigration laws and many countries, for example, New Zealand, require a work visa to volunteer on a WWOOF farm (Immigration New Zealand, 2016a). Although, the 'internationality' is reflected in the WWOOF's new name, still the majority of volunteer participants are represented by privileged populations

from developed countries and WWOOFing remains a Western phenomenon. Further information on the change of terminology can be found in Kosnik's (2013) study.

Today, the WWOOF represents a supportive network which helps farmer members to recruit travellers who have an opportunity to stay as working guests on a wide variety of organic farms, small holdings, gardens, spiritual communities, and other rural enterprises (Federation of WWOOF Organisations, 2016). In return for the help on the farmers' property, WWOOFers receive food and accommodation and other immaterial benefits, for example, farming and agricultural experience, contact with nature and animals, access to beautiful places off the beaten track, physical exercise, in addition to learning skills from hosts such as cheese making, bee keeping, crafts, or helping the farmer to run a farmers' market stall (Nakagawa, 2016; Ord, 2010; Tutzer & Stefanie Gruber, 2016). WWOOF also provides interpersonal benefits like friendships with people from many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, along with the chance to experience entirely different ways of life and to grow personally.

Currently, the WWOOF movement unites about 50 countries that have regional WWOOF offices; approximately 50 more countries are members of WWOOF Independents – a network for WWOOF organisations without a regional office (International WWOOF Association, 2013). Although the national WWOOF organisations and the WWOOF Independents operate autonomously, they communicate with each other. For example, WWOOF organisers met at the international WWOOF conferences held in 2000 in the UK, in 2006 in Japan, in 2011 in South Korea. The fourth global WWOOF conference was held in Turkey in 2014 (Pearson & Kibbler, 2014).

Until 2013, the WWOOF movement did not have any central body. National WWOOF organisations, as a result, made their own interpretations of and assumptions about what WWOOF stands for and how to organise its operation (WWOOF United Kingdom, 2017). To bring some unity and mutual understanding to what WWOOFing stands for, 15 representatives of WWOOF national organisations met at the first WWOOF International conference in 2000 in England. By the end of the conference, WWOOF coordinators had agreed to work out guidelines to indicate what is meant by being a WWOOFer, a WWOOF host, and to go WWOOFing. It was also decided to encourage and support emerging WWOOF organisations in developing countries (Kosnik, 2013).

The second WWOOF conference took place in 2006 in Japan. The main goal of this conference was to establish the International WWOOF Association (IWA) (Burns & Burns, 2006). The IWA is operated by WWOOF New Zealand on behalf of several national WWOOF organisations. The third WWOOF conference took place in 2011 in South Korea. As a result of the conference, WWOOF's mission was clarified:

WWOOF is a worldwide movement linking volunteers with organic farmers and growers to promote cultural and educational experiences based on trust and non-monetary exchanges helping to build a sustainable global community (Federation of WWOOF Organisations, 2016).

Additionally, a resolution to create a democratic not-for-profit body which all WWOOF groups could join with equal rights was put forward. After 18 months of discussions and negotiations between national WWOOF organisations, the Federation of WWOOF Organisations (FoWO) was established in March 2013. The aim of the FoWO is to unite, promote, protect, and support the WWOOF movement around the world (Baird, 2011).

The overall goal of the fourth global WWOOF conference was to share ideas about the WWOOF movement and to compare and contrast experiences. During the conference representatives of the 28 WWOOF national offices shared best practice examples in terms of organisational management, website content, and successful promotions (Kosnik, 2013). Two WWOOF organisations, France and Italy, reported on their struggle to ensure WWOOFing was a legal activity, as local governments had made significant changes to labour law with regard to volunteering. Other members of the WWOOF movement (Bangladesh, India, and Cameroon) talked about the additional roles the WWOOF offices perform in educating their hosts, as well as their WWOOFers. Additionally, FoWO's first Annual General Meeting was held during the conference.

In terms of the global organisational structure of the WWOOF movement, there are three WWOOF portals (Figure 1):

1. www.wwoof.net –The Federation of WWOOF Organisations which was founded in 2013 to unite, protect, and promote the WWOOF movement worldwide. It serves as an umbrella organisation which represents around 40 WWOOF national organisations. The FoWO's role is to support and promote national WWOOF organisations, liaise with representatives of the organic

movement, and deal with trademark issues. The FoWO is affiliated with WWOOF Independents.

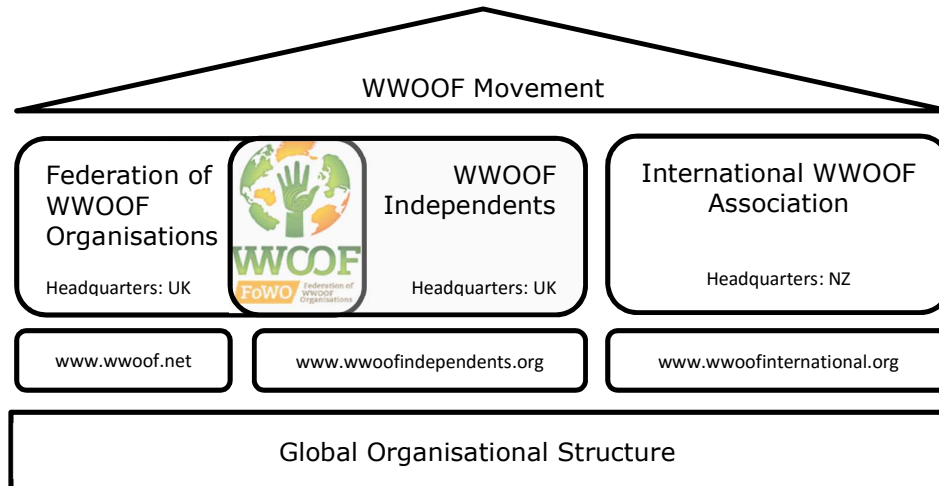


Figure 1. WWOOF Movement Global Organisational Structure.

2. www.woofindependents.org – WWOOF Independents links volunteers with organic farmers and growers in countries without a national WWOOF organisation. The main role of WWOOF Independents is to maintain a website and list of independent hosts.

3. www.woofinternational.org – The International WWOOF Association (IWA) founded in 2006 represents four WWOOF national organisations in New Zealand, Australia, France, and Japan.

Most of the national organisations are guided by the FoWO’s mission and organise their local network as best suits local hosts and volunteers, while following an accepted set of principles. Those principles include the concept of knowledge and culture exchange in relation to organic farming practices, non-monetary exchange of labour for food and accommodation, and mutual respect (Kosnik, 2013). However, contrasting with this global mission statement, some national groups focus on the local community, food, work, and the rural lifestyle. For example, WWOOF New Zealand states that its aims are to enable people to learn first-hand organic growing techniques; to enable town-dwellers to experience living and working on a farm; to show alternative ways of life; to improve communication within the organic movement; to help develop confidence in becoming self-sufficient; and, to meet interesting people and make useful contacts (WWOOF New Zealand, 2016).

Table 1. The Largest WWOOF Organisations.

Country	Existing Since	Number of Hosts	Source
UK	1971	688	www.woof.org.uk
New Zealand	1973	2399	www.woof.co.nz
Australia	1981	2600	www.woof.com.au
USA	2001	2,151	www.woofusa.org

New Zealand is the second oldest WWOOF organisation and has the second largest number of hosts (Table 1). In 1973, a New Zealand farmer from Nelson started advertising his farm and seeking the help of volunteers in the WWOOF UK booklet. A decade later, WWOOF New Zealand had about 100 hosts and many volunteers visiting the country (J. Strange, personal communication, 2014). Nowadays, it has 2399 farmers and an estimated 12949 volunteers (K. Millener, personal communication, 2017).

Indeed, considering the issues and differences of the organisations regulating the WWOOFing movement it is important to understand how the underlining values of WWOOFing influence this type of tourism experience. Thus, this thesis seeks to look at social construction of WWOOFing experience as it is lived by farmers and volunteers and to explore if, and to what extent, the aims being promoted by the FoWO, WWOOF Independents and WWOOF New Zealand, are met and achieved.

1.2 Research Aim

The main objective of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience as perceived by WWOOF farmers and WWOOFers. To understand the social construction of WWOOFing experience means to understand how the phenomenon is created and developed by the social actors, farmers and WWOOFers, through their socio-cultural practice, WWOOFing exchange on New Zealand's organic farms. Broad information about the WWOOFing experience is available from magazines (Clarke, 2004; Kimble-Evans, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2011; Trainor, 2008) and internet blogs (Coleby, 2010; Hyman, 2011; McGovern, 2012) which often describe participants' stories and provide advice for prospective farmers and WWOOFers. In the media, the programme is positioned as an inclusive, low cost, sustainable, and meaningful form of travel which offers a contrast to mass tourism products (Barrett, 2004).

The WWOOF phenomenon came under the spotlight of academic researchers at the beginning of the 2000s. At that time, farm tourism received increasing attention from academics who were driven to understand the phenomenon and its fundamental defining characteristics (Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock, 2010). Despite the diversity of studies on farm tourism there was no mention of the Willing Workers on Organic Farms organisation (WWOOF) as a contributor to farm stay operations (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). Initially, the scholarly awareness of the WWOOF phenomenon as an area of importance was concerned with farm-based tourism and volunteering (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; Nimmo, 2001; Stehlik, 2002). Recently researchers from different disciplines have focused on various aspects of WWOOF phenomenon. Such as, WWOOF eco-pedagogy (Nakagawa, 2016), WWOOF as a part of civic agriculture (Holtwick, 2016), and WWOOF as a form of sustainable tourism and its connection to the food production industry (Apple 2016; Deville et al., 2016b; Mostafanezhad, Suryanata, Azizi, & Milne, 2015).

The existing qualitative studies about the WWOOF programme do not, however, go deep enough to understand the subjective, lived experiences and ideals of WWOOFing participants. This lacuna may in part be because of the limited number of studies concerned with the WWOOF movement. Even though the WWOOFing phenomenon has gained more attention from academia in recent years, the knowledge on WWOOFing is limited. Furthermore, the extant studies represent not only the tourism discipline, but also include political sciences, psychology, and business studies.

In fact, despite its potential significance, scholarly attention and research on the social construction of the WWOOFing experience have been noticeably absent from the tourism literature. Understanding a phenomenon related to the lived experiences requires an understanding of the participants' subjective stories, philosophies and ideals. Consequently, the overall aim of the present research is to fill this knowledge gap in the tourism literature by seeking to provide deeper meanings of the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experience of farmers and volunteers. Considering this research gap and the under-researched position of the WWOOF phenomenon in tourism studies, this thesis seeks to draw upon previous literature related to the WWOOF phenomenon and to discuss it thoroughly in Chapter Two.

To fulfil this thesis' aim, a constructivist approach was deemed the most appropriate way to study WWOOFing experiences between farmers and

WWOOFers. The research also seeks to understand what constitutes an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience, as constructed by farmers and WWOOFers. To achieve this aim a creative qualitative methodology, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®, was adopted for this research. This methodology grounded on social constructionist principles aligns with researchers' epistemology and allows to bring individual participants' voice. Detailed information on LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® and other methods used in this research are presented in Chapter Three.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis, which aims to provide deeper understandings of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience, consists of five chapters. This introductory chapter has set the context for this doctoral research by providing the background of the WWOOF movement, discussing the research's aims and questions, and presenting the thesis structure. Relevant details that pertain to the research structure and highlight the purpose of each chapter are outlined next.

Chapter Two, the Literature Review, examines the tourism literature from the broad perspective of alternative tourism and sets the scene for the researched topic. This chapter draws on the connection between WWOOFing on a farm and volunteer tourism. Furthermore, the chapter presents literature relevant for understanding the values and espoused ideals incorporated within the WWOOF movement. After discussing the broader issues of the WWOOFing phenomenon in tourism studies, the chapter elucidates the major knowledge gap in the previous literature to support the thesis aim. It incorporates a review of the literature to help explain the social construction of the WWOOFing experience.

Chapter Three, Theoretical Framework, focuses on the philosophical approach (i.e., social constructionism) and the mix of qualitative methods underpinning this research. This chapter starts by describing dominant paradigms in tourism research and moves towards an appropriate philosophical framework for examining the social construction of the WWOOFing phenomenon. This chapter also explains the positioning of the researcher in this study.

Thereafter, Chapter Three describes the research design, in particular, its qualitative and inductive approach which is based on thematic analysis and Ketso methodology and provides an overview of the methods used for data collections (participant observation, interviewing, reflexivity, and LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology). The chapter provides an overview of the

study's sample. The chapter then discusses the data analysis techniques (i.e., thematic analysis and Ketso methodology). It finishes with a discussion on trustworthiness and credibility in the research, describes ethical considerations, and addresses the research's limitations.

Chapter Four, Results, begins by introducing the research participants. It then describes how the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is socially constructed by presenting the core themes: 'dirt', 'crossing the threshold', and 'ideals'. The chapter continues with reporting the results and describes how, with the help of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology, the participants in the WWOOF programme metaphorically construct an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience. The chapter finishes with the chapter summary.

Following on from the results, Chapter Five, Discussion, presents the findings and key themes that were identified through analysis of the data. The key results from three LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops are integrated into the wider findings. Specifically, core elements of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience are discussed, and the findings of this research related to the broader tourism literature. This chapter discusses how WWOOFing participants construct their subjective experiences as revealed from the research context studied.

Chapter Six, Conclusion, presents the final thoughts relevant for this thesis outcome. Specifically, this chapter argues that it is time to move away from the notion that host communities and tourists interact only on an economic level, since non-commercial volunteer tourism programmes like WWOOF has gained popularity. Suggestions for future research are offered alongside the conclusions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to this thesis that seeks to explore the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. The chapter begins with a discussion of a wide body of research on the development of the tourism industry and the growing need for alternative tourism. The section then defines alternative tourism and continues with a discussion of farm and volunteer tourism as a branch of alternative tourism. Bearing in mind the research question, literature on host-guest relationships and communication of ideals is also reviewed. The second part draws attention to the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms movement.

2.1 Moving from Mass to Alternative Tourism

This section examines the literature from a broad perspective of alternative tourism and sets the scene for the research topic. Previous WWOOF studies discussed the phenomenon in the scope of alternative tourism. Hence, one of the key concepts relevant to this thesis is the notion of alternative tourism. Although the tourism industry became a mass phenomenon in the late 19th and 20th centuries, people have been travelling for many centuries (Singh, 2012). Ancient tourists including Greeks and Romans who travelled around Europe, as well as early Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu pilgrims, were travelling long before the tourism industry was developed. Until the end of the 19th century, early travellers usually represented the wealthy upper class in society, who often combined travelling with different activities (Prasad, 1980). Such as, trade, education, scientific exploration and discovery or conquest of other countries and their resources (Honey, 2008; Khoo-Lattimore, 2012). This has changed in the 20th century when the concept of mass tourism was born (Peeters, 2012; Vainikka, 2013).

Mowforth and Munt (2009) argue that an industrial capitalism has a direct connection to a mass tourism infrastructure, which allows people to spend leisure time away from their home. With the development of industrialisation, globalisation, and mobility, tourist numbers have constantly increased (Aramberri, 2010; Morgan, Lugosi, & Ritchie, 2010; Singh, 2012; Wyllie, 2011). Murphy (1985) affirms that motivation, ability, and mobility are vital factors for the development of tourism as an industry. In fact, according to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the number of international arrivals have

increased 30-fold since the 1950s and passed the 1 billion mark for the first time in 2012 (UN World Tourism Organization, 2013a).

With the development of mass tourism, academics, mainly from anthropology, geography, sociology, and economics, began to study tourism (Urry, 1990, 1991). Many academics agree that tourism is a multifaceted phenomenon which can not be described in one sentence (Meethan, 2001; Walker, 2011). Deville (2011) has summarised key definitions of tourism which I present as a mind-map in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Definition of Tourism

Source: Adapted from Deville (2011).

While Przeclawski (1986) defines tourism as a "form of human behaviour" (p. 11), Leiper (2004) elaborates upon that definition saying:

Tourism can be defined as the theories and practices for being a tourist. This involves travelling and visiting places for leisure-related purposes. Tourism comprises the ideas and opinions people hold which shape their decisions about going on trips, about where to go (and where not to) and what to do or not to do, about how to relate to other tourists, local,

service personnel. And it is all the behavioural manifestation of those ideas. (Leiper, 2004, p. 44)

Smith (1989) defines a tourist as "a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change" (p. 1). Urry and Larsen (2011), on the other hand, state that modern tourism could be defined as a consuming good, which is aimed to please the tourists through the experiences they made when they 'go away'. Singh (2012) states that tourism is a mature industry "made up of strange paradoxes" (p. 1). The UN World Tourism Organization defines tourism as "a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes" (UN World Tourism Organization, 2013a). This definition highlights how tourism extends into many spheres including the economy, the environment, the lives of residents at the destination, and other travellers. Tourism is, then, both product, experience, relationships and system.

Since the emergence of tourism as a formalised industry, it is important to understand the development and impacts of tourism as well as the motives of tourists. Cohen (1972) created one of the first typologies of tourists, dividing them into two groups. The first group is institutionalised tourists, who are organised and individual tourists, who represent mass and package holidaymakers. The second group is noninstitutionalised tourists, who are "very loosely attached to the tourist establishment" (p. 169), thus they represent alternative tourists travelling on their own, often without a precise time schedule or exact purpose for travelling. Non-institutional tourists are further divided into 'explorers', the people who individually organise their holidays and try to avoid the beaten track, and 'drifters', who represent tourists seeking exotic experiences in remote locations living as local people. In 1977, Smith developed Cohen's work using a wider sample of international tourists which reveals a greater diversity of tourist types including explorer, elite, off-beat, unusual, mass, and charter tourists (Smith, 1977). Later, in 2000, Smith compared these tourist types with the market terms. He concluded that, 'explorers' and 'elite' travellers represent high-class adventure travels to exotic locations, and 'mass' and 'charter' tourists represent mass tourists of the popular destinations and whose daily expenses are five times less than those of 'explorers' (Smith & Brent, 2001).

Tourism ranks third in the world's export category after fuels and chemicals. It remains one of the fastest growing industries in the world with an average

annual growth of 3.5% since 1990 in terms of international tourist arrivals (UN World Tourism Organization, 2013b). As of 2016, the tourism industry represents 7% of the world's exports of goods and services and is the leading export sector in many developing countries (UN World Tourism Organization, 2016). Since its emergence as a mass western phenomenon, people have argued about the positive and negative impacts of tourism on the environmental, economic, and social-cultural spheres (Burns & Holden, 1995; Pearce, 1989, 1995; Shaw & Williams, 1994). Much of the research on tourism has concentrated on the relationship between human activity and its impacts. This scholarly discussion has been influenced by the discourse of sustainable development initiated by the Brundtland Commission Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

For the purpose of this chapter, it is important to make several points. First, the early discussion on the negative environmental and sociocultural impacts of tourism began in the 1970s (Krippendorf, 1987; Young, 1973). Over time, scholars have discussed the impacts of tourism widely (Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Mason, 2016; Smith, 1981; Wong, McIntosh, & Ryan, 2013). Despite the fact that tourism has a positive economic effect as it creates jobs, brings foreign currency into countries and develops infrastructure, it can also lead to negative impacts like an increase in land prices (Neto, 2003) or create inequalities between different regions of the country (Tosun, Timothy, & Öztürk, 2003). Since people visit various locations, they interact with local people and involve themselves in host-guest relationships. Researchers have written much about sociocultural benefits as well as negative impacts like cultural misunderstandings or even the importation of crime, gambling, and prostitution from other regions (Dann & Cohen, 1991; Doğan, 1989; Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Smith & Brent, 2001; Theobald, 2004). Theobald (2004) mentions various negative impacts on the environment from the tourism industry including water, land, and air pollution, or the extinction of plants and animal species.

As a result, through the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and Johannesburg Summit in 2002, UNWTO has created policies and instruments for sustainable tourism development which have begun to be considered worldwide (UN World Tourism Organization, 2013c). As such, UNWTO encourages the implementation of the 10YFP Sustainable Tourism Programme and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism with the aim to increase the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development, as well as reducing poverty and fostering sustainable

development. As the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and works towards minimising tourism impacts.

Despite its negative impacts, it has been argued that tourism can be a helpful tool to increase not only economic but also sociocultural and environmental welfare (McCool & Lime, 2001; O'Reilly, 1986; Theobald, 2004). However, some researchers debate whether tourism can be categorised as an industry. Compared to conventional industries, where the products and services are brought to the consumer, tourism, by contrast, brings the consumers to products and services at their final destination. Touristic locations 'import' tourists to the landscape, local people, and culture and allow tourists to participate in activities offered by the host community (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Davidson (2005) suggests that tourism is not an industry but rather a sector that impacts economic progress and acts as a social force.

In connection with this idea, researchers and governmental authorities seek for new, sustainable forms of tourism. Eadington and Smith (1992, p. 3) believe that incorporating harmonious environmental, social, and community values into a tourism product could contribute to the positive experience between hosts and guests. Other researchers call for sustainability in tourism through care not only about the future, but also about the 'Other', the well-being of living things, and their relationships with the material world that sustains them physically, socially, emotionally and, for many, spiritually (Camargo, Jamal, & Wilson, 2013). Leiper (2004) notes a decline in mass tourism as new, alternative, and more responsible forms of tourism emerge.

Since the 1990s, the power of tourism as a 'social force' has been recognised, in particular by the scholars coming from sociological, psychological, or anthropological perspectives (Barnard & Spencer, 1996; Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012; Minnaert, 2014). Studies on tourism as a social force have focused on the motivation of tourists, angsts of the host community, and social impacts of tourism. Krippendorf (1987) believed that 'new tourism' could improve human lives and promote a better reality and a better society. Dann (1988) and Higgins-Desbiolles (2008) emphasise that apart from being an industry, tourism also embraces interpersonal and cultural components of human activity which could be a driving force for new tourism. According to Higgins-Desbiolles (2006), alternative or other forms of tourism, which reveal

tourism's full capacity as a social force, could play an important role in dealing with the future challenges linked to securing ecological sustainability and social stability in the world. These include ecotourism (with its emphasis on conservation and environmental education), volunteer tourism (where tourists make meaningful contributions at their holiday destination), and peace through tourism (where tourism is used to develop cross-cultural understanding and conflict resolution).

Over the last two decades, the term 'alternative tourism' has arguably been overused by researchers (Butler, 1992; Deville, 2011) in an attempt to describe different kinds of tourism and the term 'sustainable tourism' has remained ambiguous and misguided (Bramwell, Higham, Lane, & Miller, 2017). Confusion has been created in the research field through the linking of sustainable development to specific forms of tourism, such as 'alternative' tourism, with a willingness to treat these forms as a synonymous concept (Butler, 1999). Although wider academic discussion on the differentiation of the meaning of the concepts is important, for the purpose of this thesis the following section signifies the difference between two forms of tourism: alternative tourism and mass tourism.

Essentially, alternative tourism represents an alternative to mass, conventional, or to what Cohen (1972) calls, institutionalised tourism. There are various tourism forms that differ from mass tourism: i.e., responsible tourism (Wheeller, 1991), alternative tourism (Eadington & Smith, 1992), new tourism (Mowforth & Munt, 2003; Poon, 1993), sustainable or low-impact tourism (Wearing & Neil, 1999; Wheeler, 1993), soft tourism (Sharpley, 2000) slow tourism (Fullagar, Markwell, & Wilson, 2012), and hopeful tourism (Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2012b; Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007). Alternative tourism is a concept that embraces "a variety of concerns and responses focused on the tourists, some on the host culture, some on the natural environment, and some on the political environment" (Richter, 1989, p. 193). Alternative forms of tourism represent tourist products or services which differ from those of mass tourism in terms of supply, organisation, and the involvement of human resources and potentially embrace a qualitatively different story and experience (Deaden & Harron, 1994; Isaac, 2010; Nash & Butler, 1990). Alternative tourism may include rural tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, and thematic tourism linked to cultural and historical heritage, traditional cuisine, music, and handicrafts (Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism, 2013). Mowforth and Munt (2003) give an overview of some forms of alternative tourism, many

of which are connected to environmentally friendly or nature-based tourist activities but also include archaeotourism, anthrotourism, culture, ethnic, and soft tourism.

While alternative tourism is often described as a better option compared to mass tourism, "it cannot resolve the problems engendered by conventional mass tourism" (Cohen, 1987, p. 13). Some scholars also attest to mass tourism being sustainable (Peeters, 2012; Weaver, 2007; Weaver, 2012). However, it is believed that alternative tourism could complement mass tourism and satisfy tourists seeking specific experiences which it is often not possible to acquire through traditional mass tourism products, for example, those alternative tourism products that are linked to natural history, language, photography or life in rural regions (Butler, 1992). This idea is also supported by Richter (1989), who calls for sensitivity to the values of a destination area, and suggests that alternative tourism products should consider the carrying capacity of the destination and care about the preservation of the natural environment by engaging in "non-exploitative relationships between hosts and guests" (p. 193).

Thus, alternative tourism often represents small scale and low impact tourism, which is supported by the community in the final destination (Pearce, 1992). Positioned as such by Deville (2011), one example of such alternative tourism products could be the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms programme. WWOOF is a volunteer exchange programme that connects volunteers willing to work on an organic farm for up to six hours a day in exchange for food and accommodation, usually living as a part of the farmer's family. WWOOFing could be called low impact tourism because it is supported by particular community and groups of people in the destination and is driven by their values.

Previous tourism research confirms that WWOOFing offers travellers unique experiences by combining travelling, social and cultural exchange, education, and sustainable and alternative ways of living (Álvarez, 2013; Börjars, 2012; Bunn, 2014; Burns & Kondo, 2015; Malec, 2014). In this context, alternative ways of living refers to lifestyles that are more conscious of the limits of the natural world (in contrast to those of the majority of people living in a mainstream western setting). Many WWOOF hosts choose to live in a rural setting; they support self-sufficiency, sustainable production and consumption and are often involved in natural therapies and practices including those based on Eastern cultures, such as mediation, yoga, and the Ayurveda healing system (Deville, 2015). In turn, WWOOFers themselves could be labelled as `interactive

travellers' "who seek out new, authentic experiences that involve engagement with natural and cultural environments ... and [they] are very interested in interacting with people" (Ministry of Tourism, 2008, p. 14).

In tourism studies, WWOOF is consistently conceptualised as a specific form of tourism. As such, it is labelled as agricultural, farm, volunteer, slow, transformational, or ecotourism, all of which can be thought of as a part of alternative tourism (Choo & Jamal, 2009; Deville & Wearing, 2013; Fullagar et al., 2012; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). In the next section, I review the literature related to the farm tourism. I also draw the connections between WWOOFing and farm based tourism.

2.1.1 Farm-based Tourism

Due to the multifaceted nature of tourism concepts, researchers often fail to arrive at a single definition of a certain tourism phenomenon. Farm tourism is no exception. Farm tourism is often described as a form of alternative, slow, and sustainable tourism (Page & Getz, 1997). Keane (2000) and Ollenburg and Buckley (2007) point out difficulties in the usage of the terms 'rural' and 'farm tourism' and describe rural tourism as the entire tourism activity in the region and farm, or conceptualise agritourism as tourist activities based on an operating farm or connected to a farm's agricultural activities. According to Weaver and Fennell (1997), farm tourism represents "rural enterprises which incorporate both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component" (p. 357). Nickerson, Black, and McCool (2001) define farm (or agritourism) as a subset of rural tourism, whereas rural tourism encompasses all activities undertaken in rural areas such as ecotourism and adventure tourism (McGehee & Kim, 2004)

Due to historical developments in tourism, rural tourism activities were limited until the 18th century (Butler, Hall, Jenkins, et al., 1998). Towner (1985) connects growing attentiveness to rural environments with increased interest in romanticism and scenery sought by some British upper-class tourists on a European 'Grand Tour'. Over the intervening two centuries, rural recreational activities gained increasing popularity with tourists wanting to escape from urban areas by choosing niche tourism products based in the rural area (Hall & Roberts, 2001). The interest in rural tourism could, thus, be explained on the whole by changes impacting society overall.

As life in urban setting is determined to be faster, more stressful, and globalised, the 'rural' is becoming its opposite and taking on a more utopian image as being simpler, slower, more natural, and thus more meaningful, compared to the urban (Hall & Roberts, 2001). This idealistic impression of rurality becomes "a peculiar blending of nostalgia, wholesomeness, heritage, nature and culture, combining the romantic combination of man and nature working in harmony, captured on calendars and Christmas cards throughout the developed world" (Butler, Hall, & Jenkins, 1998, p. 13). Studies such as those by Boissevain (1996) and Hummelbrunner and Miglbauer (1994) confirm that the balance of demand for tourism products is shifting from the consumption of mass products to more individual, diversified, and meaningful tourism experiences (Urry, 1991).

Farm-based tourism is recognised as an alternative activity, for individuals, to diversify the economic prosperity of operating farms (Tiraieyari & Hamzah, 2011). Tetik and Girgin (2010) highlight the positive sociocultural, economic, and environmental benefits of programmes like WWOOF and other forms of farm-based tourism on host communities in rural regions. As the demand for farm-based tourism increases, more rural landowners and traditional farmers are being attracted by the economic benefits of rural agritourism enterprises (McGehee & Kim, 2004). They think beyond growing crops and producing animal products and create intangible experiences for tourists (Garcia-Ramon, Canoves, & Valdovinos, 1995; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). Although farmers are primarily motivated by economic benefits and a desire to fully utilise their resources (Busby & Rendle, 2000; Nickerson et al., 2001; Weaver & Fennell, 1997), some studies conclude that farmers are also attracted by social benefits such as sharing the rural experience with outsiders, opportunities to socialise and to meet new people, and satisfaction (Getz & Carlsen, 2000; Weaver & Fennell, 1997). A desire to educate the wider community about agriculture and the origins of food is also a main motive for farmers to offer farm-based tourism activity (Nickerson et al., 2001; Putzel, 1984). The above mentioned findings on farmers' motivations to start a farm-based tourism business correspond with the findings around the motivations of farm hosts regarding the volunteer farm tourism exchange programme, WWOOF (McIntosh, 2009).

Despite World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms programme does not representing a 'typical' farm tourism product, it does provide tourists with the opportunity to engage in educational, cultural, and recreational activities and gain meaningful experiences in a rural setting. WWOOF could serve as an

excellent example of farm-based tourism; it could, however, also be argued that WWOOF is not a type of tourism because of its non-monetary origin (Deville, 2011). Although the majority of WWOOF hosts do distinguish themselves from commercial farm-based tourism providers (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). Ord (2010) did conclude that WWOOFing overlaps with commercial tourism as many WWOOF farmers offer commercial services to paying guests. WWOOF allows people not only to travel to different countries but also to learn about organic farming, implement and develop various skills during work on the farm. In addition, WWOOFers engage in cultural exchange by interacting with locals in their homes, which offers meaningful intercultural exchange and experience for both parties. This indicates that the WWOOF experience embraces environmental friendliness, openness to new things and cultures, and is strongly connected with volunteering. McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006) emphasise that because of the non-commercialised nature of WWOOFing experiences, WWOOF is potentially more aligned with the notion of volunteer tourism rather than with farm tourism.

2.1.2 Volunteering in Tourism

Volunteer tourism or 'voluntourism' is another tourism phenomenon which falls under the umbrella of alternative tourism. Various scholars from the fields of management, economics, psychology, sociology tourism, and hospitality management are interested in the phenomenon of volunteering (Duckett, 2002; Ganesh & McAllum, 2009; Van Lange, Schippers, & Balliet, 2011; Wilson, 2000). In organisational studies, volunteering is defined as "a form of altruistic behaviour" (p. 3) with the aim of helping others without expectation of any material compensation in exchange (Musick & Wilson, 2008). According to the Charities Aid Foundation, volunteering is becoming increasingly popular, and about a billion people around the world are involved volunteer activities (Charities Aid Foundation, 2016).

Volunteer tourism had its origins in the 19th century when missionaries, doctors, and teachers travelled around the world in order to help others (Benson, 2011b). Modern volunteer tourism serves various projects and includes international and domestic volunteering in developed and developing countries (Wearing & McGehee, 2013b). Currently, researchers position volunteer tourism as an emerging field of tourism studies (Young, 2008) and highlight its potentially transformative nature (Barbieri, Santos, & Katsube, 2012).

In tourism studies, researchers present various definitions of volunteer tourism, but, to date, there is no single definition that is generally accepted (Lyons & Wearing, 2008; Wearing, 2001, 2002). However, Wearing's definition (2001) is widely used:

...the generic term 'volunteer tourism' applies to those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment" (p. 1).

Volunteer tourists are also described as organised "purpose-driven travellers [who] seek meaningful journeys" (Rogers, 2007, p. 20) and who are, as mentioned above, are involved in "the aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment" (Wearing, 2001, p. 1). Brown (2005) provides a definition of volunteer tourism from a tour operator's perspective, and McGehee and Santos (2005) define volunteer tourism from the volunteer's point of view and refer to it as a timely activity, which occurs outside of the regular sphere of the daily life of a participant.

Aside from the multiple definitions, tourism research literature offers a variety of perspectives regarding the context and where volunteer tourism should situate. Many researchers place volunteer tourism under the umbrella of alternative tourism (Cohen, 1987; Cohen, 2004; Dernoï, 1988; Ellis, 2003; Halpenny & Caissie, 2003; McGehee, 2002; Singh, 2002; Singh & Singh, 2004; Uriely, Reichel, & Ron, 2003; Wearing, 2001). Others consider it as a part of ecotourism (Gray & Campbell, 2007; Wearing & Neil, 1998) or present it as 'new tourism' (Poon, 1993), 'niche tourism' (Novelli, 2005) or 'new moral tourism' (Butcher, 2003, 2005). Some researchers label volunteer tourism as 'charity', 'justice', 'pro-poor', or 'goodwill' tourism (Butcher, 2003; Butcher & Smith, 2010; Rogerson, 2011; Scheyvens, 2011; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004).

During the last few decades volunteer tourism has steadily grown and some individual volunteer tourism organisations have massively expanded. For example, Earthwatch reports 100000 volunteers in 1400 projects and 120 countries being involved in voluntary work between 1971 and 2016 (Earthwatch Institute, 2017). Furthermore, Tomazos and Butler (2009) confirm a rapid increase in the numbers of volunteer tourism projects between 2003 and 2007; as of 2007, these amount to 3441 projects offered by 146 volunteer

organisations listed on a Volunteer Abroad database. Wearing and McGehee (2013b) believe that reduction of the travel barriers and increase in the middle class in many developing countries in the past two decades, as well as people's desire to seek out more unusual travel experiences, have provided an excellent climate for the development of volunteer tourism. Others explain the establishment of the volunteer tourism phenomenon as resulting from the recognition of the negative impacts of mass tourism (Brown & Morrison, 2003; Mowforth & Munt, 2009).

On the other hand, Butcher and Smith (2010) associate its growth with the modern 'life' politics in which people, and especially young adults, search for meaningfulness and their individual identity by wanting to make a difference in the world. The purposes behind volunteer tourism projects vary and range of from taking care of animals, to preserving ecosystems, to building a school, to providing medical service and teaching, all with the main goal of supporting and improving the lives of marginalised people in local communities (Rogers, 2007; Tomazos & Butler, 2009). Whereas one of the main holiday motives of many tourists is just the desire to escape from daily routine (Uriely, 2005), volunteer tourists are motivated by a desire to make a positive change and to give back to the communities at their travel destination (Lyons & Wearing, 2008).

Motives form an integral and meaningful part of the volunteering experience, and thus people have different motives for undertaking volunteer work. Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Miene, and Haugen (1994) identified six common motives for volunteering:

1. values (describing altruistic concerns for others);
2. understanding (related to the desire to acquire new experience and exercise existing skills);
3. social motives (aimed at building-up social relationships);
4. career motives (focused on gaining relevant experience);
5. protective motives (keen to decrease personal problems); and,
6. enhancement (linked to personal development and psychological growth).

These volunteering motives are strongly linked to personality context and personal identity. Clary, Snyder, and Stukas (1996) conclude that "people engage in volunteer work to satisfy important social and psychological goals; and different individuals may be involved in similar volunteer activities but do so to achieve different goals" (p. 487).

Gidron (1983) found that volunteers seeking satisfaction need to be engaged in challenging work which allows the development of the individual's skills and abilities and brings recognition to the individual's life. Altruistic-minded volunteers are people who want to be useful, benefit society, and improve reality. Rushton (1980) points out the similarities between people with an altruistic personality and underlines that altruists are more helpful, kinder, more considerate and compassionate than others. Allen and Rushton (1983) subjoin that positive attitudes towards self and others, a sense of self-efficacy, and emotional stability are among the personality characteristics associated with altruistic behaviour. Wilson (2000) argues that "motives are a key organising feature of everyday life" (p. 218). Thus, they play a significant role in the public perception of volunteering. Motives are part of an identity discourse, giving meaning to and helping to shape the behaviour of volunteers (Fischer & Schaffer, 1993; Midlarsky & Kahana, 1994). Compared to non-volunteers, volunteers are empathic, have high moral standards, emotional stability and also show a positive attitude towards self and others (Allen & Rushton, 1983; King, McGowen, Doonan, & Schweibert, 1980; Smith & Nelson, 1975; Tapp & Spanier, 1973).

Much has been written on the motivation of volunteers, as scholars try to understand why volunteers travel and whether their motives are different from those of mainstream tourists (Andereck, McGehee, Lee, & Clemmons, 2012; Brown, 2005; Chen & Chen, 2011; Lo & Lee, 2011). Researchers agree that volunteer tourists mainly seek alternative experiences that are different from those sought by mass tourists. Like Clary et al. (1996) discussed above, altruism, self-development, connecting with locals, giving back to the host community, participating in community development, and cultural understanding are found to be main motives for engaging in volunteer tourism (Brown, 2005; Brown & Morrison, 2003; Callahan, 2010; Coghlan, 2008; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004; Wearing & Deane, 2003). Despite seeking for meaningfulness and the desire to contribute, egoism and altruism are two main ideas underpinning literature examining volunteer motivations (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). Such studies are similar to those tourism studies where researchers debate the issue of self-interest versus altruism.

Scholars who highlight egoism as a motivation factor claim that volunteers are self-interested and that their self-driven motives seek for a positive personal outcome (Green, Aarons, & Cross, 1984; Hoy & Miskel, 1991; Miller, 1985). On the other hand, volunteers driven by a purely altruistic nature are those most

respected by others (Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996, p. 375). In turn, Mustonen (2007) argues that it is too difficult to separate volunteer tourists' altruistic and egocentric motives and anticipate that these motives are interconnected. Therefore, leaving aside the issue of self-interested motives, most studies reported that volunteers were interested in helping others (Carter, 2008; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004; Tomazos & Butler, 2011).

Researchers widely discuss essential personal benefits gained by volunteer tourists in exchange for their time, money, and labour in a foreign community (Pegg, Patterson, & Matsumoto, 2012; Wearing & McGehee, 2013a; Yamamoto & Engelsted, 2014). These essential personal benefits contribute to a clearer self-perception, better understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and motivations and can significantly impact or change a person's lifestyle (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Wearing, 2002). By spending time in the host communities, volunteer tourists experience different cultures on the ground in an open and cooperative environment, which allows them to engage in the transformation and the development of self (Wearing, 2001). Furthermore, researchers differentiate volunteer tourists from other tourists because they seek close interpersonal interaction with the host community that blends with their social values (Singh, 2002; Singh, 2004; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004; Zahra & McIntosh, 2009).

A substantial and growing body of literature has investigated the volunteer tourism phenomenon. This phenomenon has become of increasing interest to tourism researchers in the last 10-15 years (Benson, 2011b; Butcher, 2003; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Singh & Singh, 2004; Tomazos & Butler, 2011; Wearing, 2001; Wearing & Neil, 1998; Yeoman et al., 2014; Zahra & McIntosh, 2009). Previous studies on volunteer tourism for example, were predominantly qualitative. Stebbins and Graham (2004) describe three forms of volunteering as leisure; Singh (2002) draws attention to the connection between altruism and voluntourism, and Prouteau and Wolff (2008) shed light on the relational motive of volunteer work. In their studies, Mustonen (2006) and Singh and Singh (2004) connect volunteer tourism with pilgrimage. Brown and Morrison (2003) examine "potential means for tour operators to build volunteering into itineraries" (p. 73); others focus on understanding the motives for volunteer tourism (Brown, 2005; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Sin, 2009). Recent studies examine the geography of volunteer tourism (Keese, 2011; Mostafanezhad, 2012), the impacts of volunteer tourism on host communities (Lupoli & Morse, 2015; Zahra & McGehee, 2013) and personal benefits of volunteer tourists

(Barbieri et al., 2012). In their study on volunteer tourism experiences, Barbieri et al. (2012) identify volunteer tourism as a gratifying experience, because it contributes to personal development, connecting with local people, and experiencing local lifestyle on a non-monetary basis.

In one recent paper on volunteer tourism, McGehee (2014) reviews the 30-year evolution of volunteer tourism as a phenomenon, industry, and research area. In her research, McGehee (2014) also addresses the impacts of volunteer tourism and calls for more research aimed at improving volunteer tourism in terms of its sustainability for all participants. One example of sustainable volunteer tourism programmes is the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms, which can potentially offer a volunteer a novel and unique way to contribute to both sustainable rural development and individual hosts participating in the programme.

WWOOF incorporates traits of both farm-based tourism and volunteer tourism. As a part of farm tourism, WWOOFing is characterised by small scale independent farmers with strong environmental views and a passion for organic farming (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001) who offer an authentic farm tourism experience by involving tourists in real agricultural activities as opposed to 'staged' commodified activities provided by commercial tourism farms (Phillip et al., 2010). As a volunteer farm tourism exchange programme, WWOOF is characterised by a balanced relationship between hosts and guests and by minor involvement of intermediary nongovernmental organisations in contrast to the offerings of 'typical' volunteer tourism organisations that offer various volunteering opportunities (often in exchange for a significant monetary contribution towards the organisation) (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Hence, by investigating the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experience as a unique form of non-commercial volunteer farm tourism exchange this research would fill the gap in tourism literature.

2.2 WWOOF Accounts in Academic Literature

An increasing number of people are becoming aware of the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms phenomenon. As briefly discussed in Chapter One, this movement originated 45 years ago in England and has spread globally, embracing around 100 countries (Federation of WWOOF Organisations, 2016). Due to strong historical ties, after its foundation in the UK, the WWOOF movement spread to New Zealand. New Zealand's WWOOF organisation is the second oldest and is currently the second largest WWOOF network. In terms of

numbers of hosts and guests, New Zealand's success comes second to that of Australia and is followed by WWOOF USA. WWOOF New Zealand operates as a privately owned business and is a strong advocate of the International WWOOF Association (International WWOOF Association, 2013).

The WWOOF movement was shaped within the context of a 'back to the land' movement supporting organic farming, environmental trends, and 'green' worldviews in industrialised contemporary society (Pier, 2011). In this context, 'organic' refers to chemical-free or 'natural' forms of agriculture and WWOOF's central aims and underlining values stem from involvement in and support of the broader and currently expanding movement concerned with organic food production (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, 2017; Lockie, Lyons, Lawrence, & Mummery, 2002; Organic Trade Association, 2017). The distinctive aims of WWOOF are to connect people from urban areas with farm hosts in order to support them in organic farming, to provide education about organic farming practices, and to engage in a sociocultural exchange between WWOOFing participants.

Although WWOOF is a global phenomenon that exists in approximately 100 countries, there is limited academic literature available on it (Deville, 2011). Academic interest in WWOOF emerged about 16 years ago and has seen a significant increase in publications on it in the last five years. This interest correlates with the growth of WWOOF organisations worldwide and continuously increasing numbers of WWOOF participants or WWOOFers (Deville et al., 2016b). Apart from tourists seeking alternative ways of travel, this increase in the popularity of WWOOFing may also be influenced by increasing awareness of environmental issues and concerns related to mass food production (Kosnik, 2013; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; Nimmo, 2001; Obojes, 2007) and ease of modern communication technologies including the internet (Bernkopf, 2009; Deville et al., 2016a; Kosnik, 2013; Nimmo, 2001). Whilst WWOOF has been studied mainly by scholars from the tourism discipline, it is also studied by scholars of environmental, social, and cultural studies, see for example Alvarez Villanueva (2012), Bernkopf (2009), Börjars (2012) and Durmic (2012).

An understanding of WWOOFing history, its underlying values, and interaction with the tourism industry is crucial to this thesis' aim, which is to explore the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Such a perspective provides an indication of essential elements of WWOOFing experiences and how an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience is constructed by farmers

and WWOOFers in New Zealand. Previous academic studies on WWOOF have predominantly focused on the WWOOF exchange often restricting the study either to the farmers or WWOOFers' perspective and neglecting the social construction of WWOOFing experiences. Previous studies have also been predominantly quantitative, concerned with numbers and statistics around the WWOOF programme, with some recent studies providing deeper subjective meanings around the WWOOFing phenomenon. Most existing literature on WWOOF is geographically limited to one country, although Kosnik's recent study looked into the international WWOOF movement (Kosnik, 2013). Moreover, previous WWOOF studies, the majority of which are unpublished theses, are mostly unaware of each other's research and hence engage in conjecture without taking previous research into account in a systematic way.

2.2.1 WWOOF as Non-commercial Volunteer Farm Tourism

Most previous tourism studies on WWOOF were developed in the context of alternative tourism. As discussed above, the term 'alternative tourism' embraces tourism types that differ from 'mass' or 'conventional' tourism and it has been used since the late 1980s (Wearing, 2001; Wearing & Neil, 1998). Researchers sought to understand WWOOF's relationship to farm-based tourism, volunteer tourism, sustainable and ecotourism and gave it those labels respectively. Scholars struggled in their attempts to label WWOOF as a particular form of tourism, as various WWOOF members resisted WWOOF's being identified as a tourist activity.

Much of the current literature on WWOOFing sees the phenomenon as a part of alternative tourism. In previous studies (Deville, 2011; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) scholars have identified WWOOF as a part of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Nimmo (2001) states that WWOOF represents a form of decommodified ecotourism. Choo and Jamal (2009) propose WWOOFing as a potentially new form of ecotourism and call it 'eco-organic farm tourism'. WWOOF provides a unique opportunity to experience a rural and organic lifestyle, to learn about organic farming, foreign culture and, ultimately, gain an alternative life experience (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). McIntosh and Campbell (2001) conducted the first study focusing on WWOOF in New Zealand in 2001. This study examined WWOOF hosts' attitudes, motivations, and environmental values in New Zealand. In 2006, a further study was conducted by McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006) which focused on the WWOOF network in New Zealand and the experiences of the volunteers.

Researchers have found that farmers do not see their WWOOF farms as farm stays (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001), that WWOOFers distinguish themselves from tourists (Nimmo, 2001), and that representatives of national WWOOF organisations prefer to distance WWOOF from tourism altogether (Dana, 2012; Ord, 2010). Kosnik (2013) criticises the above mentioned studies for having a 'tunnel view' and failing to connect the underlying values of the WWOOF movement with relationships between members and the global WWOOF network represented by the Federation of WWOOF Organisations and International WWOOF Association. A number of pioneer WWOOF studies were conducted by Alison McIntosh and her team; these focused on the WWOOF New Zealand network as a part of alternative tourism (McIntosh, 2009; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006).

In New Zealand, WWOOFing is especially popular among young low-budget travellers and share a similar profile with backpacker tourists (K. Millener, personal communication, 2016). The first WWOOF study conducted by McIntosh and Campbell (2001), sought to understand not just the motivations of farmers who offer a farm stay experience as a part of WWOOF network but also to evaluate farmers' environmental values. Their quantitative study, based on a postal survey with WWOOF hosts, concluded that WWOOF farmers' motivations and experiences are notably different from those in other farm tourism hosts. Specifically, an environmental ethic and shared knowledge of organic farming practices were considered essential. Additionally, their study provides demographic details of the WWOOF hosts and draws attention to the gender dimension as mainly female farmers were responsible for the hosting experience of WWOOFers.

The following qualitative study by McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006) builds upon the previous research and investigates whether the experiences provided by WWOOF farmers are different from those offered by commercial farm stays. The findings highlight the notably different experience offered through WWOOFing compared to that offered in commercial farm stays. WWOOFing incorporates important key elements of this tourism experience. According to McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006), travellers were attracted to WWOOF farms because of their remote rural locations; the opportunity to learn about organics and alternative lifestyles; the personal meaningfulness of the experience; and, the element of sincerity in the experience. The study clearly highlights the alternative nature of WWOOFing experiences between farmers and WWOOFers:

Because of the philosophies of the WWOOF organisation and its network of member farms, the WWOOF experience may have the ability to heighten understanding between people from different cultural, social or ideological backgrounds, 'endear' visitors to rural regions in support of wider economic development initiatives, engender or raise appreciation, care and concern for the natural environment, support for the organic movement or an alternative lifestyle, and encourage self-reflection and personal development among visitors. (p. 97)

Significantly for this thesis, previous New Zealand-based studies (McIntosh, 2009; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) and the numerous accounts of WWOOF on the internet and in the press highlight the 'special' interactive nature of the WWOOFing experience between WWOOF farmers and WWOOFers. Hughes and Stitt (2008) call WWOOFing an 'energy exchange' programme, which distinguishes this type of tourism experience from economically driven, market-based, and commodified host-guest programmes. The WWOOF programme is deemed as a useful, inexpensive scheme for undertaking immersed (Nimmo, 2001) forms of experience with difference or 'otherness' as an important element for many tourists (Franklin, 2003; Matos, 2004; Woehler, 2004) by providing a sense of adventure and new and unexpected social experiences (Mosedale, 2009).

Another study (Nimmo, 2001) explores WWOOF as a form of ecotourism and recognises the 'romantic gaze' of WWOOFers wishing to escape urban settings. Many WWOOFers represent travellers, who are dissatisfied with a "western way of life... [and] felt the pressure of globalisation, and a loss of control over their lives" (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2001) and seek more responsible and less harmful travel experiences. Stanford (2008) defines four vital aspects of responsible tourism: economic, cultural, social, and environmental aspects. These aspects are related to the concept of sustainability and the "concepts of respect, awareness, engagement (and taking the time to engage), excellence and reciprocity, as well as the harder facts of spending money" (p. 270). However, researchers agree that to be a responsible tourist does not mean having to demonstrate all of these dimensions (Stanford, 2008). In that case, WWOOF can also be identified as a form of responsible tourism. Previous research has proven that WWOOFers embrace respect and awareness towards the environment and often support the organic movement's 'green ideals'. As a volunteer farm tourism exchange programme, WWOOF offers reciprocity and mutual benefit for WWOOF farmers and WWOOFers if they are able to meet each other's expectations. Moreover, as a form of responsible tourism, WWOOF

benefits the local economy by supporting local food production and engagement with the local community offering sociocultural exchange and education.

Although historically not the main objective, another highlighting feature of the WWOOFing experience is its educational aspect. Aside from being identified as a tourism exchange programme, WWOOFing has developed into a network for cultural and information exchange. For instance, Stehlik (2002) focuses on the learning experiences in WWOOFing. The WWOOF network not only educates its participants about organic farming practices and farming techniques but can also bring personal development including building social capital for both farmers and WWOOFers. Some examples highlighted in Stehlik's study include WWOOFers who helped their hosts to develop carpentry and IT skills and taught traditional medical techniques from the WWOOFer's culture (massage and acupuncture) (Stehlik, 2002). Despite practical skills, WWOOF enables people to grow personally through engagement with local customs and environments. For volunteers, the WWOOFing experience often facilitates personal discovery (Devlin, 1998) and personal development (Jamieson, 2007; Maycock, 2008; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) which often lead to an alteration in worldviews (Farrer, 1999) or a change in overall life direction (Deville & Wearing, 2013). Deville et al. (2016a) emphasise the importance of the educational facets of WWOOFing ensured by the nature of WWOOFing experience and human engagement in a noncommodified setting.

Malec (2014) and Álvarez (2013) highlight educational aspects of the WWOOFing experience by stating that WWOOF farms offer not only touristic and sociocultural experiences but also serve as hubs for non-formal education with a focus on sustainable agriculture practices. In her quantitative study, Melin (2012) investigates whether active learning could be used as a tool for behavioural change using the example of the WWOOF programme. This study surveys 1381 WWOOF volunteers who report positive changes in their attitudes, beliefs, and emotions towards sustainability. WWOOFers shared the point that being involved in organic farming activities and having hands-on experiences helped them to gain or strengthen their proenvironmental attitudes. The results of the study revealed that as an active, experiential learning experience WWOOFing could act as a potential tool for increasing proenvironmental behaviour and strengthening sustainable ideals. In her introduction on WWOOF, Maycock (2008) deliberates about the balance of challenges and benefits of the WWOOFing experience and proposes WWOOF as a programme which can

facilitate teaching and learning in relation to organic farming and alternative lifestyles in adult learning.

Following the debate on 'sustainable tourism development', Moscardo (2008) suggests viewing volunteer tourists as human resources for regional development. For example, volunteers could contribute in areas such as educational development and assist with traditional economic activities. She argues that WWOOF is a successful example of the use of volunteer tourists to support local agriculture. This argument is based on the portrayal of New Zealand WWOOF hosts who use WWOOFers help to enhance their farms (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). Indeed, Deville et al. (2016a) argue that mutually beneficial WWOOFing exchange can be seen as a form of economic benefit for the hosts, since WWOOFers contribute their time and labour to the immediate improvement of the host's welfare.

In his earlier study based in Australia, Deville (2011) sees WWOOF as a tool or a 'new model of travel' which gives an opportunity for long-term budget travellers to extend the period of travel. Moreover, WWOOF exchange gives travellers a chance to meet and engage with locals on cultural and social levels beyond those available in commercial tourism settings. Ateljevic and Doorne (2001) mention that long-term travelling, including WWOOFing, could be seen as "a distinctive form of escape from mainstream 'institutionalised' tourism flows" (p. 175), as these types of travellers seek freedom and flexibility. The WWOOF programme is crucial for those travellers who are not keen on the usual commodified 'touring' and 'gazing upon' tourism products (Deville et al., 2016a), as it allows tourists to 'avoid the beaten track', which otherwise can be difficult to achieve (MacCannell, 2001; Richards & Wilson, 2004) and engage in a meaningful exchange experience with locals.

The research on WWOOF as a part of transformational tourism was carried out by Deville (2015) and Deville and Wearing (2013). These researchers argue that to be transformational, tourism has to provide experiences leading to change through challenging the purpose and meaning of life through empathic, engaged, authentic, and invited encounters with locals (Deville & Wearing, 2013). Research confirms the transformational power of the WWOOFing experience, since farmers report a high level of involvement in environmental, conservation and restoration projects, advocating for the self-sufficient low impact lifestyle, and supporting the organic movement. On the other hand, for many WWOOFers, who become inspired by the ideals and ways of life of the

WWOOF hosts, WWOOFing experiences provoke deep questioning of ideals, and the purpose and meaning of life on their path for more sustainable living (Deville & Wearing, 2013). WWOOFing participants confirm that mutually beneficial outcomes are related to the shared subjective experiences, social interactions, and cultural exchanges between farmers and WWOOFers and that these outcomes are transformational in a variety of ways (Deville, 2015).

Miller and May's recent study (2015a) investigates how WWOOF volunteers view their WWOOFing experience and how those experiences fit into a broader context of volunteer and alternative tourism. Miller and Mair (2015b) comment that WWOOF as a non-commercial volunteer farm tourism programme has the potential to move tourism from an experiential commodity to a decommodified experience. However, in a later study, Deville et al. (2016a) found a confluence of WWOOF with mass tourism. These researchers explore the ways in which WWOOFing appears to be increasingly exposed to processes of commodification and how WWOOFing discourse shifts from alternative to mass tourism. Deville et al. (2016a) argue that this change in WWOOFing is connecting with the growing popularity of the network between farmers and WWOOFers. This change is influenced especially by those participants who look beyond the original underlying values of the WWOOF movement, i.e. when farmers see the WWOOF network as offering access to low-cost labour and when WWOOFers are less motivated by organic farming and more by a cheap form of holiday.

In this sense, understanding the social construction of the WWOOFing experience as it is constructed by farmers and WWOOFers becomes vital. Stateva (2010) takes a step towards understanding the significance of the authenticity of the WWOOFing experience for volunteers. She finds that WWOOFers engage in constant dialogue with authenticity in WWOOFing based on the four criteria i.e., the farms' facilities, purpose, organic lifestyle, and culture. Earlier research on WWOOF calls attention to understanding the participants' values and the need for a match between the motivations of farmers and WWOOFers in order to achieve a mutually beneficial WWOOFing experience (Durmic, 2012; McIntosh, 2009; Nimmo, 2001). Alvarez Villanueva (2012) explores expectations of WWOOF hosts and volunteers based on the psychological contract i.e., "an individual's beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party" (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). In WWOOFing, exchange farmers expect their volunteers to be trustworthy and reliable in fulfilling work obligations and WWOOFers expect sufficient food, safe accommodation, fair

work, and learning opportunities. Despite the obvious exchange of food and accommodation for labour, both parties, farmers and WWOOFers, expect to receive learning opportunities, social contact, and cultural exchange from the WWOOFing experience. The study concludes that the psychological contract between farmers and WWOOFers is breached (Rousseau, 1989) when an individual host or volunteer perceives that those expectations were not fulfilled (Alvarez Villanueva, 2012). The above mentioned studies predominately neglect the deeper meanings of subjective interactions between WWOOFing participants.

Researchers looked at WWOOF from different angles. Azizi and Mostafanezhad (2014) investigate farm hosts' experiences and motivations for opening their farms to visitors. Their study found that hosts are motivated not only by the social but also by economic benefits of WWOOFing and the ability to sustain their environmental ideals with the help of volunteers. Stehlik (2002) focused on cultural exchange and informal adult learning aspects of WWOOFing, whereas Maycock (2008) provided a general overview of the concept of WWOOFing. With these exceptions, WWOOF has generally been studied as a volunteer network, for example, Schloegel (2007), Moscardo (2008), and McIntosh (2009). Schloegel (2007) describes WWOOFing as a well-established international volunteer programme with the potential for volunteers to share new ideas and ideals with local farmers, and vice versa. Moscardo (2008) mentions that WWOOF volunteers support farmers and contribute to the development of organic farming. McIntosh (2009) writes about host-guest interactions and the importance of communication between participants within the WWOOF network. Another study draws a connection between WWOOFing and slow tourism based on reduced mobility, a shift in modal choice, and engagement with the local community (Lipman & Murphy, 2012). Although slow tourism represents a niche area, Lipman and Murphy (2012) suggest that WWOOFing could be an option within the growing slow tourism movement as it enables travellers to stay for longer periods in one location and to experience close engagement with the local farm hosts. Certainly, there is further scope to examine the parallels between WWOOFing and slow travel, especially given the strong links to the organic movement and principles of alternative lifestyles witnessed in the earlier stages of WWOOFing.

Other studies investigate the nature of the WWOOF phenomenon in the national settings of South Korea (Choo & Jamal, 2009), Canada (Ord, 2010), Portugal (Stateva, 2010), Italy (Durmic, 2012; Wilbur, 2012), the USA (Mostafanezhad,

Azizi, & Johansen, 2014; Terry, 2014; Yamamoto & Engelsted, 2014), and Japan (Burns, 2015; Burns & Kondo, 2015). Engelsted (2011) pioneers a geographical study of WWOOF network and examines the geographic patterns of exchanging food and accommodation for labour in continental USA. Her study reveals that there is a tendency for farms to be located in areas with a greater concentration of art-related professionals and organic farms along with the distance between WWOOF farms to areas of industrial agriculture. The study concludes that WWOOF enables farmers to sustain 'an alternative form of living' in remote locations.

Another WWOOF study is concerned with changes in volunteers' identities through WWOOFing (Börjars, 2012). WWOOFers perceive that personal change is caused by WWOOFing experiences and interactions with farmers and other volunteers. Both farmers and WWOOFers consider WWOOFing a transformative experience in terms of cultural and social exchange (Deville, 2015; Deville & Wearing, 2013).

Perhaps most aligned to the aim of this thesis, two recent studies relevant to this thesis' research investigate in-depth interactions and experiences of farmers and WWOOFers (Cronauer, 2012; Deville, 2015). For instance, Cronauer (2012) examines the complexity and diversity of host-guest relationships from a non-commercial hospitality perspective, as well as uncovers the pre- and postexperiences of participants. Her study suggests that the complex and multidimensional host-guest interactions encompass relationships which are continuously reevaluated, negotiated, and transformed. Deville (2011) describes the nature of the phenomenon and examines "...it from varied perspectives of WWOOFers and hosts" (p. 11). Deville (2011) concludes that WWOOFing experience is successful in fulfilling the main aims of both parties if farmers and WWOOFers engage in reciprocal relationships underpinned by the participants' values.

WWOOFing exchange became more focused on the social exchange than the philosophies of the organic movement that it used to be based on (Cronauer, 2012). Therefore, interpersonal relationships between farmers and WWOOFers become more important. Previous WWOOF studies on host-guest relationship (McIntosh, 2009; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; Seymour, 2007) report a potential mismatch between farmers and WWOOFers, especially when WWOOFers align with 'backpacker' identity. This imbalance in host-guest relationship is also evident in the literature on commercial homes (Andersson

Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Kastenholtz & Sparrer, 2009; Lynch, Di Domenico, & Sweeney, 2007; Lynch, McIntosh, & Tucker, 2009), spiritual hosting (McIntosh & Mansfeld, 2006), and host-guest interactions and exchange (Paraskevaïdis & Andriotis, 2017; Sharpley, 2014; Smith, 1977; Smith & Brent, 2001; Trucker, 2003; Tucker & Lynch, 2005; Zhang, Inbakaran, & Jackson, 2006). These scholars point out that the relationships may be problematic by the clash of participant's ideals, motivations and philosophies. However, Ingram (2002) assures that if the motivations of hosts and guests are compatible, the exchange experience is likely to be satisfactory for both parties. Nevertheless, previous tourism studies on hosts-guest relationships fail to focus on the deeper meanings of the host-guest exchange experience. This leaves an important knowledge gap in the broader and deeper understanding of the subjective experiences in WWOOFing phenomenon. This thesis argues that scholars have neglected to explore the problematic nature of experience in host-guest relationship, which is complex, personal and multi-dimensional. This thesis seeks to address this research gap by aiming to understand the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experience and to explore how participant's create and experience their reality. Furthermore, this research endeavours to understand an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience as it is constructed by farmers and WWOOFers. Understanding an 'ideal' WWOOFing experiences from the farmers' and WWOOFers' perspective will help to clarify how to make sense of individuals' perceptions in order to create a positive experience for both parties. If farmers and WWOOFers are aware of the characteristics of the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience, they might not feel overwhelmed by the need to communicate clearly, adapt and negotiate, and the obligations and rules might become clearer.

Previous studies on WWOOF have neglected the social construction of the WWOOFing experience, which means that they have predominantly neglected how the phenomenon is created and developed through the socio-cultural practice of exchange between farmers and WWOOFers. Hence, the deeper understanding of the meanings of the WWOOF phenomenon has been neglected too. None of the previous studies go far enough in terms of uncovering and evaluating the elements which socially construct the WWOOFing experience and how those experiences are shaped, sustain, and challenge particular conceptions of values, ideals, and lifestyles in this type of tourism. Arguably, as a distinct form of tourism, WWOOFing has very clear underlying values and philosophies which form the interaction between farmers and WWOOFers

throughout their networks and shape the wider philosophy of this volunteer exchange programme (Cronauer, 2012). Notably, key values of creating a cultural and educational exchange while working together as espoused by aims of WWOOF movement (Chapter One) and philosophies of care and concern for the environment and organic movement are characteristics of the WWOOF phenomenon not readily studied by previous scholars.

In short, scant research has explored this unique form of social exchange in this type of tourism, and the role of the ideals of farmers and WWOOFers here has been neglected too. Combining the values of alternative, sustainable, farm, and ecotourism with values of volunteer tourism, WWOOF farmers and WWOOFers seek meaningfulness in their actions and create special values and philosophy within this tourism phenomenon that remain unheard in tourism discourse.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

Selecting a philosophical approach and an appropriate methodology is crucial for all research. While alternative theoretical approaches were considered, social constructionism, which recognises the involvement of the researcher within the research context, underpinned the methodological approach to this research and the writing of the thesis. This chapter identifies and discusses the research framework applied to investigate farmer–WWOOFer experiences in the WWOOF volunteer exchange programme and the way those experiences are constructed. Firstly, the chapter presents the discussion of the appropriate paradigms with which to examine the relationships and construction of WWOOFing experience. Secondly, the chapter provides justification for the interpretivist approach to research and a rationale for the rejection of alternative paradigms. Further, the chapter illustrates why social constructionism was the appropriate theoretical approach to inform this research and understand the phenomenon of the WWOOFing experience. Next, it describes the researcher’s position within the research. It continues with a description of the research design, particularly the participant sample and how participants were recruited. The chapter then explains the steps in the data collection and analysis processes. Finally, a discussion of the ethical considerations, limitations and a chapter summary is provided.

3.1 Appropriate Paradigms to Examine the Social Construction of WWOOFing

Every piece of research is framed within a fundamental set of beliefs and values about reality, truth, and knowledge, whether the researcher is aware of it or not (Jubien, 1997). In the research process, researchers question the nature of reality (ontology), what knowledge is and how the researcher comes to know the reality (epistemology), the role of values in research (axiology), and the moral principles and values that underpin the research process (ethics) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011b; Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

In tourism research, the constructionist paradigm is often applied to the study of social interactions, for example, travel experiences, hospitality experiences, and host-guest interactions (Dunn, 2005; Li, 2010; Pritchard & Morgan, 2005; Tribe, 2008). To conduct research in this paradigm requires extended periods of time spent in the field, as researchers become ‘social actors’ within the tourism setting which is being studied (Jennings, 2010, p. 42). Constructionism

seems to be the most appropriate paradigm for the examination of the WWOOFing experiences as they are constructed by farmers and WWOOFers, as this phenomenon is related to socially constructed realities. The social constructionism paradigm allows depth for the researched and for the researcher to be greatly involved in the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The constructionist paradigm is a subjective research approach which accepts multiple realities which are co-created between researcher and participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b, p. 24). Doing research within this paradigm means that the group of people being studied does not represent a wide group of the population; it does, however, mean that the results of the study contain deep meanings and multiple realities of the phenomenon. Social constructionism helps to determine the meanings from which participants create their reality.

Investigation of host-guest interactions within the WWOOF phenomenon fits into the constructionist paradigm as these interactions are a construct of social exchange and interaction based on the subjective, individual worldview of participants and their shared exchange. This worldview is a way to see the realities which are shared solely by participants in the WWOOFing network. The goal of the social constructionism approach is to identify the ways in which individuals and groups of people take part in the co-creation of their perceived social reality, which is fluid and constantly changing through those interactions. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009) stress that social constructionism "is not particularly theory-oriented; the focus is rather on the 'disclosure' of how social phenomena are socially constructed" (p. 15). In the realm of social constructionist thought, humans construct their realities by constructing the meanings through ideas which appear to be natural, obvious, and accepted by people. As such, the constructionist paradigm seems highly appropriate to the current research aim, which is to gain a deeper understanding of social interactions and experiences within WWOOFing.

3.2 Moving Towards a Social Construction of the WWOOFing Phenomenon

The second half of the 20th century was a period of significant changes in the social sciences. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) traced the shift from dominating quantitative to qualitative research methods by defining three periods of so-called 'paradigm wars'. The first was the period between 1970 and 1990 and they defined it as postpositivist – the constructivist war against positivism. The

next stage, 1990-2005, describes the conflict between three paradigms including postpositivist, constructivist, and critical theory paradigms. The last and most recent stage is distinguished as the conflict between evidence-based methodologies and mixed methods, interpretive, and critical theory schools; this stage has been on-going since 2005 (Denzin, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a; Oakley, 1999). The term 'social construction' had spread throughout the global scientific communities by the 1930s (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2014). However, to date, there are certain ambiguities in the research literature around usage of the terms social construction, constructivism and constructionism (Sismondo, 1993). Some comments and critiques in one branch of social sciences concerning social construction may not be relevant in another one. Additionally, in the research literature, the terms constructivism and constructionism are often used to talk differently about same things (Crotty, 1998).

To begin with, *social construction* consists of two terms. The term *construction* is used as a verb rather than as objective and the adjective *social*, in this context, means '*not individual*' or not produced by a single person (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2014; Eberle, 1992). The concept of the social construct is multidisciplinary in nature and has roots in disciplines including philosophy, psychology, sociology, and linguistics (Burr, 2015). Figure 3 below presents a graphical description of the '*social construct*' approach.

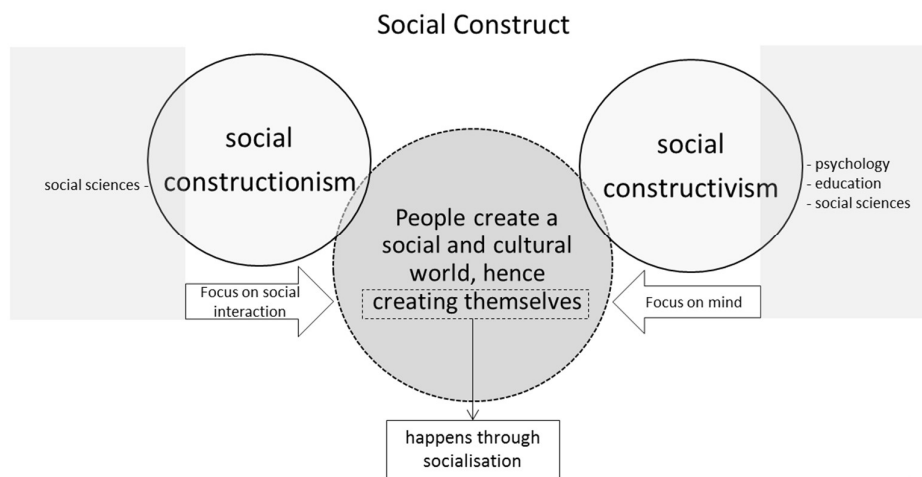


Figure 3. The Social Construct Concept.

The '*social construct*' which consists of two views: 1) *social constructivism*, which has its origins mainly in psychology and education and focusing on the

mind; and, 2) *social constructionism*, which originates in the social sciences and focuses on social interactions. Both views assume that reality is socially constructed by the individuals through their interactions and the subjective meanings of their experiences.

However, social constructivism accentuates that an individual's actions and interactions in the world (alone or with others) construct knowledge on a different level; in contrast, constructionism is concerned with characteristics of social involvement, relationships, the setting of activity, and historical change (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Burr (2015) highlights a twofold difference between social constructivism and social constructionism, which lies "...in the extent to which the individual is seen as an agent who is in control of this construction process, and in the extent to which our constructions are the product of social forces, either structural or interactional" (p. 22).

Misinterpretations and misunderstandings arise because researchers from various sciences define terms from their own particular standpoint. As many researchers use the terms *social constructionism* and *social constructivism* interchangeably, they cause confusion (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Burr, 1995, 2015; Gergen, 2009). To clarify the difference between social constructivism and social constructionism, a brief description of both concepts is given next.

Constructivism had its roots in developmental and cognitive psychology and was mainly shaped by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotskiĭ who emphasised the crucial role of social interaction in the development of cognition (Vygotskiĭ & Cole, 1978). Piaget followed this theory, and he was interested in how people construct a world picture from their experiences (Glaserfeld, 1995). He found that children construct their worldview through experience rather than accept what is told by grown-ups (Piaget, 1955). In his work, he states that "all knowledge is tied to action, and knowing an object or event is to use it by assimilating it to an action scheme" (Piaget, 1967, pp. 14-15).

Later research on social constructivism was enriched by Bruner (1966), who applied social constructivism to education and by Von Glasfeld (1984), who is the founder of 'radical constructivism'. A distinctive feature of social constructivism is the focus on the mind; i.e., individuals actively construct their world through cognitive processes. As Burr (2004) explicates:

constructivism shares some basic assumptions with social constructionism but differs from it in the extent to which the individual is seen as an agent who is in control of the construction process and in the extent to which our constructions are the product of social forces. (p. 185)

Social constructionism is more complex and appreciates the interplay of sociology; it has its roots in Berger and Luckmann's work (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality* argues that together people co-create and sustain reality through social practice (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). There are three moments of social practice. The first one is externalisation and happens when individuals create an artefact or practice through their interaction. The second moment is called objectivation, where the product of an individual's activity, an artefact or practice, is "available to both to their producers and to other men as elements of a common world" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 49). The third moment in this process is internalisation, by which "the objectivated social world is retrojected into consciousness in the course of socialisation" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, pp. 78-79). Berger and Luckmann claim that, over time, interacting individuals create models of each other's actions; and once these actions become available for a wider audience, they become institutionalised. By this, they mean that if an action or a model is institutionalised, it is embedded in society. Since individuals decide what becomes embedded through their interactions, reality is deemed to be socially constructed. Thus, reality is a social construct and the sociology of knowledge should focus on processes of social construction:

It is our contention, then, that the sociology of knowledge must concern itself with whatever passes for 'knowledge' in a society ... And insofar as all human 'knowledge' is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations, the sociology of knowledge must seek to understand the processes by which this is done in such a way that a taken-for-granted 'reality' congeals for the man in the street. In other words, we contend that the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 3)

Berger and Luckmann (1966) see society as being dual in nature and incorporating an objective and a subjective reality. Objective reality is a product of the social actions of individuals and is perceived by a person as separate from her/him. On the other hand, the subjective reality is co-constructed by an individual who is involved in daily interactions.

Botterill and Platenkamp (2012) define social constructionism as “a philosophical position whereby the meaning of the social world is not discovered but is constructed by history, society, ideas and language” (p. 25). Consequently, social constructionism not only says that reality is a social construct but also indicates the historical and cultural location of the construction. From the position of social constructionism, everything is designed and constructed through language and human interactions (Young & Collin, 2004). Different constructs or worldviews are closely connected to the social community (e.g., the ethnic, professional, scientific, or religious groups) they were constructed by. Thus, key issues of social constructionism are concepts of community, human relations, social practices and conventions, language, discourses, narratives, and dialogues (Gergen, 2001).

Though the differences in both social constructivism and social constructionism are explained above, a certain ambiguity persists as the terms are used interchangeably by some researchers. Doing research within a social construct frame means reality is constructed by individuals through social interactions and that “two people looking at something together never actually see the same thing in the same way” (Beaumie, 2010, p. 58). People’s worldviews are shaped by, but not limited to, their origin, culture and language, experiences, and expectations, etc. These elements explain why everyone may see that reality differently. For the social constructionist researcher, language and communication play a central role in the interactive process through which individuals co-create their realities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Hence, for a social constructionist researcher, it is important to be one of the social actors in the research in order to reflect and catch the subjective meanings of participants’ multiple realities in the field. According to Beaumie (2010), both views on ‘social construction have emerged recently, and the process of the definition of terms is still on-going and thus, over time, it might happen that both social constructivism and social constructionism could be declared “to belong to the same extended family” (Young & Collin, 2004, p. 378). Despite confusion of the terms in research fields, in this research thesis, I refer to social constructionism, as this research is focused on social interactions rather than focus on mind.

Although traditional tourism research has been dominated by the positivist approach, discussions on research methods within the social sciences over the past two decades have focused on dissemination of qualitative research in social sciences and a purposeful rejection of the positivist paradigm as it applies to

understanding human experience (Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2007). New tourism studies with a focus “on identity, difference, the body, gender and post/structural theories of language and subjectivity” have led to a reconsideration of the research process in the social sciences (Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2007, p. 1). Xiao and Smith (2006) mention that interpretive (or social constructionist) and critical theory paradigms represent a developing shift in tourism research and demonstrate an alternative approach to knowing. Critical tourism researchers also emphasise that being involved in values-led critical tourism research means being cooperative, seeking deeper meanings, and accepting the complex nature of multiple realities (Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2007, 2012a). Considering the above and the research focus of this study, that is, to explore the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experience, as well as to investigate how this experience shapes and sustains this type of tourism between WWOOF farmers and WWOOF volunteers, the social constructionist approach is deemed the most appropriate philosophical framework for this study. This study attempts to discover social interactions within the WWOOF network which are dynamic and complex and, therefore, demand a multidimensional approach to achieve deep understanding.

In this way, new tourism research focuses on a critical investigation of relevant issues and pursues methods that need “to be characterised by sensitivity, depth, openness, flow, feeling, paradox, being and becoming” (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007, p. 25). Social constructionists seek to understand the world and people living in this world. Individuals construct their reality through “subjective meanings of their experiences”. Thus, the aim of the researcher is to discover the complexity of those meanings rather than to “narrow[ing] meanings into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Constructionist researchers seek to understand the context. Thus, personal involvement through visiting the context and personal collection of data are important; consequently, an appropriate methodology should also be chosen to achieve this end (Crotty, 1998). WWOOFing is a socially constructed phenomenon with inherent ontology and epistemology which could be reflected through an appropriate paradigm, methodology and involvement of the researcher as one of the social actors in the field. Appropriate methodologies for the exploring of host-guest relationships in WWOOFing and understanding an ‘ideal’ WWOOFing experience are now discussed.

3.3 Positioning of the Researcher

In social sciences, research design includes forming the research question, establishing the context, deciding what are the subjects of research, planning a number of actions and events necessary to address the research question, and thinking about the role of the researcher in the research (Hatch, 1996). Some social sciences researchers see two approaches in qualitative research. The first involves 'formal' methods which may include interviews, surveys and focus groups and ethnographic type methods, for example, participant observation (Nilan, 2002). This approach brings structural data into the research as the researcher often has control over issues like recruitment of the participants, place, date, time, and length of the interview or the focus group. In the case of the second approach and the application of ethnographical research methods, the researcher is in a more vulnerable position (Ballamingie & Johnson, 2011). S/he lacks control over the events that happen in the field when trying to access and to blend in with participants to capture what is taken for granted or unsaid, for example, during the interview. Researchers who use both approaches for data collection in the same study and the same field space may be limited by the need to switch rapidly between different subject positions vis-à-vis the researched.

Nilan (2002) does not find this position easy and concludes that the first approach is "constituted within a discourse of control, objectivity, even emotional detachment" (p. 364), whereas the second approach is framed by a discourse of immersion, reflexivity, and rapport. The combination of these approaches in qualitative research is a valuable tool for investigating a complex relationship, for example, the relationships between farmers and WWOOFers in the WWOOF programme. One method used in the current study is participant observation. This ethnographic approach often seeks to confirm large amounts data collected in the field setting and to complement them with reflexive notes written by the researcher who has emerged her/himself in the field. Thus, compared to the more structural approaches, this reflexive approach often provides rich and interesting data (Goodman, 1998; Nilan, 2002). While conducting research in the field researchers aim to observe 'naturally' occurring phenomena in relation to the research questions. In this setting 'naturally' assumes that events and actions in the field primarily derive from the intentions of the research participants rather than from researcher interference (Hammersley, 1998, p. 2). In this case, the researcher is the primary tool for the data collection and his or her reflection, and reflexive thoughts, are crucial

for the outcome of research, since the researcher should be self-aware of why the data is collected and how it is done (Charmaz, 2003, 2013).

As such, reflexivity may form an integral part of the research process, and a necessary tool to reflect on how the research is conducted. According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000), being reflexive means being able to “break away from consistency and narrow focus on a particular aspect, [and] to question weaknesses inherent in the mode of thought one embraces” (p. 246). Much of the debate around reflexivity in research is concerned with philosophical issues about the nature of reality and knowledge. However, reflexivity also “raises fundamental questions about our ability as researchers to capture the complex, interactional and emergent nature of our social experience” (Cunliffe, 2003, p. 984). Johnson (2009) points out that, as a part of qualitative inquiry, reflexivity stimulates researchers to be introspective, collaborative, and political.

In some academic literature the concept of ‘reflexivity’ is used interchangeably with similar concepts including ‘reflectivity’, ‘reflection’ and ‘critical reflection’ (Jessup & Rogerson, 1999, p. 176; Leonard, 1999, p. vii; Pease & Fook, 1999, p. 231). It is argued that there is a need to distinguish between ‘being reflective’ and ‘being reflexive’. Both terms, reflection, and reflexivity, have very different understandings of what is a reality, and who we are in relation to the world and others. Thus, these understandings carry different implications and responsibilities regarding our actions and interactions. Reflecting on something is like taking a step back, in order to understand our rationale and reasoning with our consciousness and being able to make logical sense of reality out there. Dewey defines reflection as an “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” (Dewey, 1997, p. 6). Being a reflective researcher means having the ability to identify personal characteristics like gender, ethnicity, age, etc. and how these influence the research. When reflecting on the research process, researchers discuss what they have experienced in the field, what they have learned, and how they have changed. In contrast, conducting reflexive research means being able to question the relationship between oneself as a researcher and one’s ontology, one’s assumptions and actions towards the research process, one’s research participants and the world around one (Cunliffe, 2009).

Reflexivity is deemed to be a methodological approach which is ideally embraced through the entire research process (Feighery, 2006b). The literature review on reflexivity in qualitative studies does not show any single definition (Buckner, 2005). To understand differences in concepts of reflexivity, Lynch (2000) distinguishes between six concepts (the mechanical, substantive, methodological, metatheoretical, interpretative, and ethnomethodological). On the other hand, Cunliffe and Jun (2005) differentiate between self-reflexivity and critical reflexivity. Self-reflexivity relates to the questions of being and acting in the world, looking for ways to make sense of our experiences, and examining the issues involved in acting responsibly and ethically. Critical reflexivity "draws from critical theory, post-structural, and postmodern commitments to unsettle the assumptions underlying textual, theoretical and ideological positions as a basis for thinking more critically about social and organisational policies and practice" (Cunliffe, 2009, p. 93). Reflexivity might give the researcher the necessary sensitivity and ability to better adjust to the fieldwork space so as to get deeper meanings in terms of the proposed research question (Munkejord, 2009). Furthermore, reflexivity boosts the ability of the researcher to stay engaged with personal reactions and the reactions of the research participants (Harris, Wilson, & Ateljevic, 2007; Russell & Faulkner, 2004).

In earlier tourism studies, researchers took a distant position by observing tourism phenomena. However, reflexive inquiry studies which give voice to the researcher have gained increased attention in recent years (Allen & Wiles, 2016; Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, & Collins, 2005; Dupuis, 1999; Everett, 2010; Feighery, 2006b; Hall, 2004; Harris et al., 2007; Tucker, 2009). The reflexive approach is deemed to be a useful complementary method that aims to deepen researchers' understanding of the tourism phenomenon and potentially uncover unique insights by giving the researcher the role of an insider, not the observer (Everett, 2010; McIntosh, 2010; Westwood, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2006). Other tourism scholars demonstrate examples of works where a researcher's voice can be expressed, ranging from reflexive ethnography focused on self-examination integrated with theoretical discussion (Howe, 2009), to more intimate works incorporating the author's emotions alongside the experiences of participants (Lewis & Johnson, 2011; Pocock, Cockburn-Wooten, & McIntosh, 2013) and research manuscripts representing the subjective lived experiences of the researcher (Brewis, 2004; Cohen, 2013).

I as the researcher have actively embraced reflexivity throughout the research process. Tribe (2005) emphasises that "reflexivity is not just a self-indulgent practice of using the first person or [researchers] writing themselves into the research. Rather reflexivity means looking and reflecting inwards upon themselves as researchers, and outwards upon those they 'research'" (p. 6). Since starting a PhD I have kept a journal about my research journey. In addition to descriptions of my feelings and emotions throughout the research process, my research journal contains a collection of field notes made during the participant observation on the WWOOF farms. In the next section, I provide further explanation of and justification for the reflexive approach used in this research. My observations are also woven into the discussion of the thesis Findings in Chapter Five.

3.4 Research Methodologies

In order to meet the aims of the thesis, that is, 1) to explore the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experience, and 2) to understand an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience as it is constructed by farmers and WWOOFers, a set of qualitative tools was employed. This section outlines the methodological design of this research and the methods used in it. The connection between the research aims, theoretical perspective and of this study are explained. In this research, I eschew the generalisations and single truth approach and instead focus on construction of subjective experiences and ideals within the WWOOF programme. Thus, I use multiple methods for the data collection including participant observation, unstructured interviews, the reflexive journal and the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology. I adopt thematic analysis and Ketso methodology to elicit deeper meanings from the data gathered. Following the discussion on participant observation and interviewing, I explain the LSP methodology. Then I examine the thematic analysis and Ketso methodology and give an explanation of how these approaches, guided by my constructionist philosophy, helped me to analyse the research data.

Even though the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms programme is represented globally as a distinct form of tourism, scant academic research has been conducted to date to explore the WWOOFing phenomenon. To recap, the programme provides an opportunity to experience a rural and organic lifestyle, to learn about organic farming, to get to know a foreign culture, and ultimately gain an alternative life experience in exchange for volunteer work on the farm (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). In the academic tourism literature, in addition

to other sources, such as the media (Pier, 2011), WWOOFing is described as a part of eco or sustainable tourism (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) and is deemed to be an alternative form of tourism as well as an alternative to tourism (Deville, 2011).

The first study on WWOOF in New Zealand adopted a case-study approach and examined WWOOF hosts' attitudes, motivations, and environmental values (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). A further quantitative study focused on the experiences of the WWOOF volunteers in New Zealand (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). Other studies have a descriptive nature and talk about the experiences of farmers and WWOOF volunteers (Maycock, 2008; Stehlik, 2002). In addition, WWOOF was studied as a volunteer network (McIntosh, 2009; Moscardo, 2008; Schloegel, 2007). In recent years the WWOOF network has gained increased attention among quantitative researchers (Farfeleder, 2012; Yamamoto & Engelsted, 2014). Other recent studies on WWOOF have adopted a case study (Kerton & Sinclair, 2010; Melin, 2012) or a mixed method approach (Engelsted, 2011; Lipman & Murphy, 2012; Mostafanezhad et al., 2015; Wilbur, 2014a, 2014b).

Many of the recent studies on WWOOF are primarily qualitative (Alvarez Villanueva, 2012; Börjars, 2012; Bunn, 2014; Deville & Wearing, 2013; Durmic, 2012; Kosnik, 2014; Miller & Mair, 2015a, 2015b; Mostafanezhad et al., 2014; Pilgeram, 2011; Terry, 2014). They have, however, predominantly neglected the social dimension of the hosts'-guests' relationships and deeper understanding of the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience. None of the studies mentioned earlier goes far enough in terms of exploring the social construction of WWOOFing experiences between farmers and how they are shaped, sustain, and challenge particular conceptions of identities, ideals, and lifestyles in this type of tourism. Arguably, as a distinct form of tourism, WWOOFing has very clear underlying values and philosophies which shape the communication between hosts and guests throughout their networks (Cronauer, 2012). McIntosh (2009) calls for the need for cooperation between WWOOF hosts and volunteers and raises the importance of good communication and the need to match the motivations of farmers and WWOOFers. Scant research has explored this unique form of exchange in this type of tourism, and the role of communication of values to understand an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience has also been neglected.

To gain a deeper understanding of the WWOOFing phenomenon and to explore the relationships between farmers and WWOOFers in the WWOOF programme an interpretive approach to research was deemed an appropriate qualitative methodology. As a qualitative researcher, I could choose from a wide variety of research methods. This research underpinned by a social constructionist approach sought to explore the subjective meanings of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. To capture subjective stories of the WWOOFing experience and the meanings provided by the research participants and to ensure the trustworthiness in this research project multiple methods of data collection were chosen (Shenton, 2004). Researchers agree that the implementation of different qualitative methods can compensate for their limitations and mutually benefit each other (Brewer & Hunter, 1989; Guba, 1981). The next section provides details of the research approaches deemed appropriate for this study.

3.4.1 Participant Observation

A key qualitative approach I used in this research was participant observation. This method, originating from anthropological research, has gained a place as a research method in the social sciences (Angrosino, 2007). Social sciences researchers are using participant observation to gain an understanding of the research phenomena through the emic perspective or what could be described as an insider's point of view. They seek to understand how people live their lives and provide a detailed, in-depth description of the social practices within the studied group of people (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012).

Researchers employing participant observation go beyond reporting events and details of experience in an empirical manner and attempt to explain how these events represent 'webs of significance' (Geertz, 1973) or the reality constructed by the research participants. Thus, it is important to allow critical categories and meanings to emerge from the encounter in the field, rather than taking an etic, more logical position to research (Pelto & Pelto, 1978). To ensure this outcome, by entering the field the researcher enters the participant's reality and becomes one of the social actors within the research (Blumer, 1962). Participant observation requires a long-term engagement in the field, as the researcher is meant to 'live' the research as one of the social actors, observe, and participate in daily activities. Personal identities and individual experiences in the field shape this kind of qualitative research.

Participant observation has a dualistic nature. On the one hand, the researcher becomes a participant and shares the reality and the rituals with the participants. On the other hand, the researcher has to maintain the stance of the observer. Ethnographic methods are widely used in tourism studies (Nash, 2000; Palmer, 2001). Recent tourism studies explore indigenous communities in tourism settings, e.g. Restrepo Campo and Turbay (2015), community development, e.g. Azcárate (2006), Cole (2008), lived experiences of backpackers, e.g. Cole (2008), Azcárate (2006) and construction of tourism identities, e.g. Pritchard and Morgan (2005). Bryman (2012) mentions that researchers, who are applying participant observation usually employ qualitative interviewing, which provides desired meanings and depth. Researchers argue that a combination of the participant observation and interviewing may help to achieve 'efficiency' in data collection (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), help to crystallise the research findings and bring different aspects of the researched phenomenon to the surface (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2001).

3.4.2 Interviewing

A second data collection method used in this research is interviewing. Interviews are widely used as a data collection method in tourism research, for example in wellness tourism research (Voigt, Howat, & Brown, 2010), tourist experience as a form of productive consumption (Jordan, 2008), and volunteers' experiences at a national folk festival (Campbell, 2009). Researchers describe interviews as a conversation with a purpose (Dexter, 1970) as they represent "one of the many ways in which two people talk to each other" (Benney & Hughes, 1970, p. 176). Gubrium and Holstein (2003) see interviews as dynamic interactions between people which help us to understand individuals and their social world. In this regard, interviewing represents a tool to explore socially constructed knowledge (Allen, 2005; Burr, 1995).

Interviews are typically divided into structured, semistructured and unstructured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Interpretivist researchers widely use semistructured and unstructured interviews as they aim to uncover the deeper meanings of the questions researched. The interviewing type depends on the degree of control the researcher or participants have over its content and process as well as the popularity of the research phenomena (Parahoo, 2014). For my research, I chose to adopt unstructured interviews. This method brings more depth to the research, as it allows asking questions

around the research subject depending on participant responses and interview atmosphere (Neuman, 2006). Patton (2002) defines unstructured interviews as an extension of participant observation as this type of interview occurs as part of on-going participant observation fieldwork.

Unstructured interviews have no formal schedule and are guided by a set of themes relevant to the purpose of research. The purpose of qualitative interviewing is to enter another person's world and to understand his or her perspective, which may offer meaningful insights into the researched phenomenon (Patton, 2002). One of the disadvantages of conducting unstructured interviews is the researcher's minimal control of the process, as the participant is leading the interview process with her or his thoughts and reflections on the research topic (Jennings, 2010). On the other hand, in-depth interviews help the researcher to gain rich data to uncover the multiple realities of the phenomenon which is being studied (Geertz, 1973). Participant observation and unstructured interviews are appropriate methods which help the researcher to become immersed in the participants' reality. Despite the advantages of the combination of these two previously mentioned methods, they still have limitations. To overcome those limitations, I have decided to apply an additional research perspective – reflexivity.

3.4.3 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is widely used in social constructionist research (Burr, 2003) and the vital role of the reflexive connection between the researcher and the research participants is recognised (Allen, 2005). As an integral part of reflexive research researchers often keep a reflexive research journal containing field notes, personal insights, understandings and emotions (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001). Using notes from a reflexive journal is an accepted practice within a constructivist approach (Denzin, 1994a). Researchers' field notes are not only a simple record of the facts and the events that happened during the fieldwork but also a way to express the researcher's feelings and reflexive thoughts about the story of the studied phenomena (Malinowski, 1967). Reflexivity enriches the quality of the research and increases the researcher's sensitivity to the participants of the research (Gilgun, 2008).

The benefits of the notes made during the research, especially during the stage of the data analysis have been discussed by many researchers (Glesne, 2011; Maxwell, 2013; Spradley, 1979). The use of reflective journals in qualitative research helps the researcher to take a closer look at the way the history,

values, and assumptions around the phenomenon are being created (Ortlipp, 2008). Moreover, field notes help to make the research process more transparent and visible to the reader. Watt (2007) highlights the importance of the field journal describing how the field notes have enriched her research through reflective writing's facilitating deeper understandings of the research methodology. Thus, a reflexive approach helps to add further depth to the exploration of research question which might not be possible through the implementation of other methodological approaches. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) agree on the benefits of being reflexive during the research, and they emphasise the necessity to create "dedicated times, spaces and contexts within which to be reflexive" (p. 425). As such, a reflexive approach to research helps the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena, to interpret events that happened in the field, and to deal with the 'entanglements' and struggles which researchers face during the research process (Ateljevic et al., 2005; Shenton, 2004).

Rather than attempting to uncover a universal truth about the exchange experience between farmers and WWOOFers, this research aimed to explore the complex relationships between WWOOF farmers and WWOOFers in this volunteer farm tourism exchange programme. The methodological approach taken for this research allowed me to participate in the construction of the multiple meanings of the subjective, lived experiences of those who participated of this research. As one of the WWOOFers myself, my emotions and personal experiences are central to the understanding of the 'ideal' WWOOF experience (Dupuis, 1999). Unlike the objectivism sought in many functionalist approaches (Oakley, 2000), this thesis considers the multiple voices of the participants and explores the subjective realities of WWOOFing. Thus, by understanding the research participants from an insider's point of view (Wearing, 2002, p. 255) and investigating their subjective realities, this thesis sheds light on the social construction of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience, also with the help of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology.

Since beginning my PhD in November 2012, I have kept a research journal where I collected various notes, thoughts, and reflections. In this research, the journal played a particularly important role during the fieldwork phase. I used a reflexive journal to note my observations on the daily activities of those who lived on the farm, my reflections after each interview and LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop as well as notes on meaningful conversations that took place as a part of my WWOOFing research. During the data collection process, I

encouraged myself to write down my critical reflections after each interview or interesting observation moment. Additionally, I reflected on my experience, emotions, and reactions when interviewing the participants, being one of the WWOOFers and observing the communication in the context of the farmers' and WWOOFers' experiences. A reflexive approach to research helped me to bring out the deeper meanings of the relationships between farmers and WWOOFers and to understand the social construction of their experiences. This methodological approach aligns with the constructionist philosophy presented in the thesis and the other methods chosen as tools in this research. The next section explains LSP methodology in more detail.

3.4.4 LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Methodology

In applying LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) methodology in the research context, this method of data collection represents an innovative approach, which fits the constructionist epistemology. Constructionist researchers argue that individuals construct their own social realities in relation to one another, hence, the researcher tends to rely upon the participants' view(s) of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2013). During the research design stage I have considered traditional qualitative methods (e.g. interviews, focus groups and observation) as well as some alternative creative and visual methods (e.g. photography, drawing, self-portrait, collage, digital and graphic elicitation). However, Liamputtong (2007) criticises the above mentioned methods as they may not sufficiently capture the co-construction of realities or address the impact of wider social dynamics between the research participants. Thus, I considered LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology as a potentially appropriate and effective methodology for exploring the social dimensions of tourism experiences as LSP encourages participants to metaphorically explore their socially constructed realities. I particularly liked the method for this ability over other methodological tools I had read about. Application of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology brings to the surface the metaphors around the WWOOFing experience, and thus helps in gaining a deeper understanding of the ideals shared by the participants. In this research metaphors played an active, constructive, and creative role and helped to create entirely new ways of understanding things.

LSP was invented in 2001 by the grandchild of LEGO founder, Kirk Kristiansen, in collaboration with academics. Professor Victor and Professor Roos, who used 'playing' as a consultancy approach, aimed to create a methodology which

would help to improve business organisations (Gauntlett, 2007). The LSP concept aligns with the philosophical assumptions presented in this thesis. Drawing on the work of Gauntlett (2007), who adopted this concept as a social sciences research method, LSP rests on four pillars: constructivism/constructionism, the concept of play, and the theory of flow underpinned by the use of metaphors.

Historically, LSP draws on many ideas from the fields of psychology and behavioural science. Two core concepts embedded into this methodology are Piaget's constructivism (1955) and Papert's constructionism (1991). Although both theories were developed through the observation of behaviour and learning activities of children, Papert believed that his findings could also be applied to adults. Piaget believed that knowledge is not obtained by children step by step but rather built into coherent, robust frameworks, and 'knowledge structures', based on their experiences in the world. Piaget discovered that children do not passively acquire experience and information but are active theory builders, who construct and rearrange knowledge based on their experiences in the world (Gruber & Vonèche, 1977). According to Piaget's theory, learners are not "empty vessels into whom we can pour knowledge" (p. 82), but rather, learners could be described as active theory creators who construct and rearrange that knowledge based on their prior knowledge and experience (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014). Piaget (1955) claimed that intelligence increases while the mind interacts with the outer world. Papert, a follower of Piaget, further developed a theory of knowledge and learning. He called his theory constructionism and based his ideas of building knowledge by 'learning hands-on' (Papert & Harel, 1991). He included Piaget's constructivism in his theory and went beyond it to emphasise that learning is exceptionally productive when people are engaged in the creation or construction of something external to themselves. According to Papert, constructionism allows abstract ideas and relationships to become more concrete, more visual, and tangible, and thus more understandable (Papert & Harel, 1991). Papert proposed that learners 'think through fingers' by producing various modes of thoughts, based on their creativity and imagination (Papert & Harel, 1991). Thus, learners are engaged when tangible objects are involved and their abstract ideas become more concrete, visual, and therefore more understandable (Papert, 1999). LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology borrowed his idea of concrete thinking, thinking with and through concrete objects as a mode of thinking complementary to more abstract, formal modes

of thought. LSP methodology believes that adults too can unlock their creative thinking through play and 'thinking with objects' or 'thinking through fingers' when constructing their reality with LEGO bricks.

The second pillar of LSP is the 'concept of play' which assumes that innovative and creative ideas are most likely to come through the playful process (Gee, 2007; Kane, 2004; Terr, 2000). LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology applies 'play' and ensures learning through exploration and storytelling or through metaphor. This method assumes that each play process has a purpose (Rieber, 1996) and defines play as "a limited, structured, and voluntary activity that involves the imaginary" (LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®, 2006, p. 4). An advantage of the LSP method is that when adults play, they play with their sense of identity and one or more specific goals in mind, such as social bonding, emotional expression, cognitive development, and constructive competition (LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®, 2006). Researchers argue that the motivational basis for play is primarily emotional (Fein, 1987; Vygotskii & Cole, 1978). A further advantage of LSP, crucial for understanding the 'ideal' WWOOFing experiences, is that "through the use of modelling and metaphor, the objects of play can take on meanings and can embody abstract concepts, thus concretising formal relationships that can otherwise be quite difficult to comprehend" (LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®, 2006, p. 6). The play process during LSP workshop is characterised by limited time and space and is structured by rules, conventions and agreements among the players and draws on elements of fantasy and creative imagination. The concept of play is linked to our identities and our imaginations, which are seen as central to the play process (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006).

LSP methodology sees three aspects of imagination: imagination as a way to describe something; imagination as a way to create something; and, imagination as a way to challenge something. The descriptive imagination is based on our experiences and its purpose is to evoke images that describe our complex reality. While descriptive imagination allows us to see what is there in a new way, creative imagination enables us to see what is not there, hence allowing the creation of something new and different. In LSP methodology, creative imagination is associated with innovation and novel thinking. In turn, challenging imagination goes beyond creative imagination; it does not add a new element to what is already there, but starts from scratch and assumes nothing (LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®, 2006). When these three types of

imagination are combined during the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop, they create a strategic imagination, which is seen as a source of original ideas.

Imagination is closely linked to story-telling and the use of metaphors. Metaphors represent “a form of thinking and language through which we understand or experience one thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 7). As a research method based on metaphorical creative exploration, LSP can reveal underlying thinking, understanding, and meanings of experiences (Carpenter, 2008; Gauntlett, 2007; Kangas, Warren, & Byrne, 1998). Consequently, LSP facilitates gaining a depth of new understandings of realities not captured by alternative methods (Wengel, McIntosh, & Cockburn-Wooten, 2016). As LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is also grounded on ‘flow’ theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991), it allows the matching a participant’s skills to the difficulty of the task level ensuring the participant can engage, enjoy, and concentrate on the process of construction regardless of her/his familiarity with LEGO bricks.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® has nowadays been developed into a facilitated workshop technique which caters for a range of situations and industries including research. LSP methodology is used with groups and its application includes, but is not limited to, the following cases: unleashing creative thinking for accelerated innovation; working out a solution to a shared problem; team-building or as a leadership development technique, and as a research tool. During an LSP workshop, the facilitator asks the participants different questions related to the main theme of the workshop. The participants answer the questions by building a symbolic model and describing their models to each other using metaphors. The key feature of the methodology is the non-judgemental, creative and playful interaction between the participants (Gauntlett, 2007). An ideal number of participants at each table is two to 12 people per facilitator. Workshops usually last between hours and four days depending on the difficulty of the task (Rasmussen, 2013).

The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® method is:

1. *A systematic set of group dynamic principles.* These principles aim to achieve 100% involvement from each participant present in the room; the role of the facilitator is to guide participants through the process by giving them time to build and reflect, and to ask questions pertaining to the model.

2. *A set of principles for the systematic use of the LEGO brick.* During each workshop, LEGO bricks are used as a tool to unlock and construct new knowledge. The method is based on the notion that there is no right way to build the model. The builder of the model owns the model and assigns the meaning to the model, and other participants must accept the model. However, participants are allowed to question the model (but not the builder of the model) with the aim of extracting deeper meaning from the model and its metaphorical story.

3. *A systematic use of the LSP techniques,* which consist of a core process and seven application techniques. The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® method includes a four-step core process (Figure 4) and a set of seven application techniques (Figure 5).

The four core processes are the essential steps of the LSP method. The questions posed during step one (or posing the question) will shape the questions posed during further stages of the workshop, i.e., step two (construction), step three (sharing), and step four (reflection).

The Core LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Process
Step 1: Posing the Question
Step 2: Construction
Step 3: Sharing
Step 4: Reflection

Figure 4. The Core LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Process.

During Step 2 participants build their models and stories to describe those models. An integral part of this particular building process is the building of new insights and the connection of hands with the mind. The next step, sharing, allows all participants to share their stories and to participate in a dialogue. The last step, reflection, allows participants to reflect on what they have heard about the models and to ask more questions to gain a deeper understanding if necessary.

Each of seven application techniques (Figure 5) is tailored to the aim of an LSP workshop. The purpose of the first application technique is to build an individual model and to unlock new knowledge, which is shared with other participants. The second application technique allows the team to make decisions and gain a mutual understanding of a given topic by combining some individual models or parts of the model into one shared model. The third application technique

aims to analyse, categorise, and recognise similarities and differences between the individual models without losing any original details or meanings.

The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Application Techniques
1 Building Individual Models And Stories
2 Building Shared Models And Stories
3 Creating A Landscape
4 Making Connections
5 Building A System
6 Playing Emergence And Decisions
7 Extracting Simple Guiding Principles

Figure 5. The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Application Techniques.

The fourth application technique seeks to determine the relationships between models by creating a physical link between them. Application technique five is an extension of the 'making connections' technique and allows participants to explore and identify the systems (unforeseen effects) and their impact. Application technique six, 'playing emergence and decisions', follows the same process as technique five and is strategic. It aims to understand how the system of models will react to different scenarios and unforeseen events introduced at this stage. At last, the goal of application technique seven is to create simple guiding principles. Simple guiding principles are developed throughout the duration of the workshop, particularly at the stage of 'playing emergence and decisions'. The goal of these principles is to support the strategic decision-making in the real time (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014). Whilst only two of seven application techniques were used in this thesis research, the other remaining five could be applied to look at broader stakeholder perspectives in the tourism system and action planning for sustainable tourism development.

Only very few academic studies describe the application of LSP in research (Cantoni, Marchiori, Far, Botturi, & Bolchini, 2009; Gauntlett, 2007; Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006). These publications are complemented by several journal articles describing the implementation of LSP as a tool for improving organisational performance within the business environment (Oliver & Roos, 2007; Peter, Jacobs, & Roos, 2005; Pickard, 2007). In tourism research, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology is advocated for its ability to create tourism realities (Wengel et al., 2016).

In this research, underlined by constructionist epistemology, the LSP concept is used to understand the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience constructed by farmers

and WWOOFers. In this project, I applied two application techniques: building individual models and stories and building shared models and stories. According to Schön (1983), metaphors could play an integral role in answering research questions. The benefits of LSP over other qualitative, creative methodological tools, such as metaphorical descriptions of the participants' ideal WWOOFing experience helped to deepen my understanding of the experiences lived by this research participants. In this research metaphors were used to link random explanations of what WWOOF means for the participants and to provide a pallet of meanings and definitions. As Morgan (1980) notes, the creative research process applies metaphors to "generate an image for studying subject" (p. 611) and to encourage the use of multiple metaphors describing a phenomenon, since no one metaphor can capture the whole organisation.

To create their metaphors, participants used the LEGO bricks imaginatively, before drawing on their conscious knowledge of what they perceived an 'ideal' WWOOF experience for them to be. Thus, metaphors are used as a filter to uncover the multiple nature of the WWOOF phenomenon from the participants' subjective point of view. In the framework of verbal language, metaphor represents a way to reveal the underlying thinking or understanding of a person. In qualitative research, metaphors help increase the depth of the meaning of understanding (Kangas et al., 1998) and "illuminate the meanings of experiences" (Carpenter, 2008, p. 274). This creative component of the research, i.e., the LSP concept, allowed a deeper insight into the understanding of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience and helped to explore the personal meanings, attitudes, and experiences of the participants. Further discussion about the LEGO workshops are provided in section 3.7.3.3.

3.5 Research Methods

In the following section, I explain the decision-making process around the recruitment and selection of participants for this research. Furthermore, I describe the research process in relation to each method in detail. I also describe the process of data analysis. Towards the end of the section, I discuss the issues of trustworthiness and credibility. Lastly, I address the ethical issues and the limitations of this research project.

3.5.1 Sample Size

Sampling represents a process which determines the selection of the research participants for the research (Fontana & Prokos, 2007). While seeking

appropriate participants, the researcher needs to make sure that potential participants are willing to share their knowledge, experience, and information about the studied phenomenon (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Thus, researchers face the challenging task of motivating and recruiting appropriate participants. The information provided by the participants forms the core to the research findings i.e., understanding the research phenomenon (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Patton, 2002). Appropriate to the research approach used, this research did not aim to recruit a large number of participants, but rather, to emphasise rich qualitative data provided by the participants during the data collection process.

In contrast to those engaged in quantitative research, qualitative researchers do not aim to generalise to a sample of the population; rather, their intention is to obtain deeper meanings and to gain insights into a phenomenon, individuals, or events. In interpretive studies, researchers purposefully select individuals, groups, and settings that could enhance and increase the understanding of phenomena (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 1997). Furthermore, interpretive researchers study phenomena in their natural settings and endeavour to make sense of or to interpret phenomena with respect to the meanings brought by the research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The steps in the sampling process vary slightly across different disciplines. Typically, qualitative researchers: 1) define the target population; 2) specify the sampling method; 3) determine the sample size; 4) specify a sampling plan; and, 5) select the appropriate sample (Altinay, Paraskevas, & Jang, 2015; Creswell, 2013).

In this interpretive study, I used a combination of non-random sampling techniques, including purposeful and snowball sampling, to recruit appropriate research participants (Jennings, 2010; Veal, 2011). When using purposeful sampling, researchers usually have one or more specific predefined groups of people in mind (Palinkas et al., 2015). Specifically for this research, members of the WWOOF movement with New Zealand WWOOFing experience were purposefully predetermined as an appropriate sample pool. Using the snowball sampling technique, I identified participants who met the criteria for inclusion in this study and then asked them to recommend other farmers or WWOOFers (who met the criteria described in the next paragraphs). New Zealand is relatively small in population, and the snowball sampling technique provided the possibility to recruit a 'hidden' population within the trusted network of farmers or WWOOFers. Combining these two techniques was vital, as the purpose of this research is to get deeper meanings and understandings of the

participant's reality and experiences (Patton, 2002). Moreover, these sampling techniques fit with the constructionist philosophy whereby the researcher allows participants to participate in the creation of the research context.

To establish initial contact and gain trust, I wrote an email to the WWOOF New Zealand organisation proposing this research. In order to recruit my participants and to gain access to the list of farms around New Zealand, I joined the WWOOF New Zealand network as a farm volunteer, or WWOOFer, and paid an annual fee of 25 NZD (as at 2013). I also established close contact with an administrator of the network through regular email or phone conversations. The WWOOF New Zealand network administrator recommended that I publish a forum message calling for prospective participants. Appendix A contains a text of the forum message I posted. Additionally, a short message about the research was sent out to the farmers by the WWOOF New Zealand network on my behalf via the 'Composte' newsletter. Appendix B contains a text of the message placed in that newsletter.

Prior to developing recruiting criteria, I endeavoured to get a big picture of WWOOFing experience. I tried to collect as much information about WWOOFing as possible, including non-academic sources like internet blogs and newspaper articles. Only after understanding the 'big picture' of WWOOFing, I started to develop the criteria for sample recruitment. The criteria to recruit an appropriate sample for this research project is based on the purpose of the research, the research setting and literature review related to the WWOOF phenomenon (Hinderer & Nielsen, 2003; Jones, 2017). In terms of inclusion/exclusion criteria, I looked for participants with a certain degree of WWOOFing experience. Thus, being a member of WWOOF New Zealand and having previous WWOOFing experience was a determining criterion for a participant to be eligible to participate. I started the sample recruitment by looking for farmers who will be willing to participate in this research and share their experiences as a WWOOF hosts. I chose to 'advertise' a study in WWOOF forum and through WWOOF newsletter instead of direct approach of farmers over WWOOF website. In this way, I could be assured that participants are motivated to contribute to this research and think that their experience might be meaningful and useful for proposed study. Moreover, an additional criterion for this study was a possibility for me to stay on the farm as a researcher and WWOOFer at the same time.

I used the following criteria to recruit an appropriate sample for this research project:

Farmers:

- Membership in the WWOOF New Zealand network
- Experienced (more than one year) WWOOF host
- English at least at conversational level
- Willingness to participate in the research
- A possibility for me, the researcher, to stay on the farm as a WWOOFer for (at least) one week

WWOOFers:

- Experienced (more than one previous farm experience) WWOOFers
- English at least at conversational level
- Willingness to participate in the research.

In total, owners of 10 farms showed interest in participating in this research. Eight farms were chosen purposefully, and two were recruited through a personal referral. Altogether, eight farmers replied to my forum message or the newsletter which I published on the WWOOF New Zealand website. A further two farms were contacted through snowball sampling (Bernard, 2013). Snowball sampling occurred when at one of the farms a host suggested contacting two other WWOOF hosts in the same region, as, in the host's opinion, these participants would make a significant contribution to the research due to their extensive WWOOFing experience. As a result, I was able to recruit a 'hidden population' for my sample by implementing the snowball sampling (Sarantakos, 2005). Researchers refer to 'hidden populations' as participants who have no defined limits (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997) and are not easily accessible by established social research means (Hampshire, 2002; Meter, 1990). Participant access to WWOOFers was initially made with help of farm hosts. Farmers have initiated the contact with prospective WWOOFers and informed about research potentially going on the farm during their stay there. If WWOOFers were interested to participate in the study, I received their contact from a farmer and sent them an information pack about this research project.

This research sought to explore the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Its aim is to understand the personal experiences of

farmers and WWOOFers, and thus to uncover the subjective, in-depth perspectives and the experiences of the study's participants. As mentioned previously, the aim of the thesis is not to represent a population but to gain deeper understanding the subjective experiences participants and to understand their realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In qualitative research, the sample size varies depending on the methodology of the study, the quality and the richness of the collected data, as well as the level of analysis and reporting (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001; Patton, 2015). It is argued that an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study should be one that can adequately answer the research question (Marshall, 1996) and it is up to the researcher to choose an appropriate methodology and to decide when enough data have been collected because of repetition in the data.

Reaching data saturation is crucial for small samples in qualitative studies (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Mason, 2010). However, data saturation is not about the amount of data per se, but about the depth of the data collected (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). Researchers point out that data saturation is achieved when there is enough information to replicate the study when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; O'Reilly, 1986). In this research, the data saturation was achieved after I had visited six farms. The data collected through interviews, observations, and two LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops appeared to be many-layered, intricate, detailed, and nuanced. At that stage in the data collection, I reached the point of 'no new data', which means that most likely no new themes would likely emerge and, therefore, data saturation had been reached (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to reaching data saturation. However, the ethnographic element of this study, the prolonged engagement in the field as a WWOOF volunteer, and the multitude of data collection methods recognised as helpful tools enabled me to reach the data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). As mentioned above, to provide richness of data, in this study I have adopted a blend of qualitative methodologies. A creative component of this research, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology, provided unique insights into understanding the ideal, socially constructed WWOOFing experience. The philosophical position and methods described above offer a unique perspective on the WWOOFing phenomenon.

3.5.2 Participants

Farmers

In all, 16 farmers from 10 farms from all over New Zealand contributed to this study. I conducted 10 interviews with 12 farmers (on two farms host couples wished to be interviewed together). Three of these 12 farmers, plus additional four farmers, were involved in LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops. All farms varied in size and the farmers had various levels of experience as WWOOF hosts. Five farms could be described as non-commercial lifestyle blocks; one of these farms also had a vast 70-hectare forest which is not bringing in any income. Five other properties were the main source of income for the family. These participant farms operated the following businesses: a grazing land lease, an orchard, bed and breakfast accommodation, a vegetable farm, and a large-scale sheep farm. Four of the five commercial farms had an organic certification; other farms were not organically certified but were determined to grow organic products. Five of the properties had participated in WWOOFing for over 10 years and have hosted many hundreds of WWOOFers. Other farmers had recently become hosts and had between two and five years of WWOOFing experience. Contact with two farms was established through snowball sampling. Initially, eight farmers responded to the forum posting in the WWOOF New Zealand network's newsletter and expressed their interest in the study (NB, the original spelling in the farmers' replies has been kept):

Mary responded to the message in the forum:

"Hi Yana, I read you are researching Wwoofing, we are about [REDACTED] mins South of Hamilton, if we can be of assistance do not hesitate to call us. We have been hosting Woofers for about five years on and off and really enjoy them. Mary A."

Tessa found the information about the study on the forum too:

"hi , you were interested in wwoof research. I hosted my first woofers in 1992. but I am in the [REDACTED] so it may be too inconvenient for you to come here. Cheers, Tessa."

Charlotte saw the advertisement about the study in the newsletter:

"Hello Yana, I read in the "Composte" that you are looking for information about WWOOF host experiences, etc. And would be happy to assist if I can. Since I joined the organisation in 2009, I have hosted 83 people, from all over the world and have really enjoyed it. I started hosting on my property north of Auckland but now live [REDACTED] in an extremely

remote but beautiful area and have a house which is off the grid, cook with a wood stove and have a vegetable garden and orchard. I am not fully organic, but most of my WWOOFers are really looking for a cultural exchange it seems they do not mind. Best wishes, Charlotte.”

Farm hosts who expressed an interest in participating in the study were sent more information about the research project. They received a participant information sheet for WWOOF hosts (Appendix C), a general guide to the themes of the interviews (Appendix E), and a description of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® concept (Appendix F). The information included in the emails sent to farmers aimed to familiarise them with the research context and the steps of the research. I informed my participants of potential topics which would be covered in the interviews, and about the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops. Finally, but importantly, the package they were sent included information on privacy protection and covered other ethical issues.

WWOOFers

An arrangement regarding access to the WWOOFers was made with the help of farm hosts. Farm hosts agreed to establish the initial contact with WWOOFers who were due to arrive at the farm. The WWOOFers were asked if they would like to participate in the research. When WWOOFers expressed their interest in the research, I emailed them an information pack about the research. The information pack included a participant information sheet for volunteer tourists (WWOOFers) (Appendix D), a general guide to the themes of the interviews (Appendix E), and a description of the LSP concept (Appendix F). The pack also contained information on potential interview topics, LSP methodology along with an explanation of participants’ privacy protection and other ethical matters. When both parties, farmers and WWOOFers, had agreed to participate in the research, the appropriate time frame for my visit to the farm was arranged.

3.5.3 Data Collection

This research project started in November 2012. I began to establish initial contact with the WWOOF New Zealand network, farmers, and WWOOFers in July 2013. It took about three months to recruit the sample; the data collection for this research took place between October 2013 and April 2014. Once farmers and WWOOFers had agreed to participate in the research, I arranged an appropriate time to visit each farm. Before starting the interviews and participant observation, following University of Waikato ethical procedures, I made sure that participants had read and understood information about the

research (as already detailed in the previous section) which had been emailed to them. When I arrived on site, I elaborated on the reasons for taking a qualitative approach to this research; if participants agreed to continue with the process, they then signed a consent form (Appendix G) and were informed that they could withdraw from the research project at any stage up to the commencement of the data analysis. During this research, one participant chose to withdraw from the research. For the purpose of this research, I have conducted 23 interviews with 25 participants and three LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops with 12 participants.

Qualitative researchers are concerned with providing sound and robust insights about a phenomenon being studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Building trust and rapport with research participants is another way to ensure the trustworthiness of research. Rapport provides the researcher with claims to the understanding of the phenomenon and authenticity of findings (Springwood & King, 2001). Building a rapport is a delicate balancing act (Bryman, 2016) and requires being socially and culturally aware during the fieldwork. Prior to my arrival at the farm, I communicated to them via email and telephone contact with most of my hosts. This engagement helped me to understand farmers and to build initial rapport with WWOOF volunteers as they were informed by the hosts about the research taking place during their stay on the farm. However, it was rather challenging to recruit participants for the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops. This difficulty is further explained in section 3.7.3.3., the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops section.

In order to establish rapport, I behaved unobtrusively as a volunteer and a researcher. However, at the same time, I endeavoured to be open and self-revealing if questions about the research arose, for example, during the teamwork on a farm or at break times. During my stay on the farm, I lived and navigated in the two worlds: one, – the WWOOFing world of my participants; and, the other – my world from a researcher's perspective (Denzin, 2009). Every day I engaged in insightful conversations with my participants. At times my participants were interested in the aim of this research, the practical outcomes, and my experiences as a WWOOF volunteer. I not only observed my participants but also listened carefully to them during these interactions. The complete immersion into the WWOOFing world of my participants helped me to reach the aim of this research, which was to explore the subjective meanings of the participants WWOOFing experience and how farmers and WWOOFers construct the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience. As a co-participant, I anticipated

that participants and I might share different subjective experiences, thus I strove to listen more attentively. Active listening boosted the empathy and strengthened the rapport between me and my research participants (Brownell, 2013).

I purposefully chose a dual role of researcher and a WWOOFer for this study, which aligns with constructionist epistemology. At times, this dual position was challenging and I experienced tension between these roles at the data collection stage. One of the difficulties I experienced is that of maintaining 'distance'. While staying on farms, I felt that I need to get 'to the action' as close as I could in order to capture the subjective aspects of the social construction of WWOOFing experience as it is co-constructed by farmers and WWOOFers. But on the other hand, to be able to capture the information and data I stepped back in order to balance my dual role and allow myself to capture how everyday realities are experienced (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). Charmaz (2004) suggest that to acquire participants' meanings researcher needs to be reflexive and to attempt to 'flow' with the experiences in the world that is studied. In some instances, I felt that my role of researcher was transformed into confidante, confessor or comforter (Stanworth, 2004). For example, in one case a farmer shared her negative encounter experiences with a WWOOFer and sought sympathy and understanding from me. In other instances, WWOOFers shared some unpleasant aspects related to the current farm stay as they saw a companion WWOOFer and a friend in me. In a challenging case like this, I used my reflexive research journal to write about the events and the feelings. During my fieldwork stage, I neither had regular supervision meetings or I had a possibility to call home when I wanted. Therefore, at times when I felt isolated from family, friends and peers, or at challenging moments when I was for example fully immersed at farm activities and had no personal time a reflexive journal helped me to reach balance. At such times, I tried to find a moment to enter my reflective notes and sometimes even to sketch in the journal (Appendix H). Thus, the journal helped me to document the lived experience of my fieldwork, my feelings and thoughts, especially when the insider and outsider identities collide.

3.5.3.1 Interviews

I conducted 23 themed interviews. I interviewed 24 participants during the 22 interviews on WWOOF farms, and interviewed one WWOOFer in Hamilton. In two cases, I conducted interviews with host couples as that was their wish. As opposed to one-to-one interviews, the interviews with couples were challenging

at times. For example, one interview was challenging as participants interrupted each other by trying to justify their remarks. In the other interview, I had an impression that a female host was very careful in choosing her thoughts as her partner was present and she felt less experienced and responsible in hosting WWOOFers. I assume that perhaps participants would not behave differently in a one-to-one interview. Table 3 provides a summary of the interviews with participants.

The one-to-one interviews were the preferred data collection tool due to the sensitive nature of potential topics to discuss, including, for example, experiences of hosts' and WWOOFers' with each other and personal beliefs on how the WWOOFing phenomenon is constructed. Amongst other qualitative methods like narratives and discourses, the in-depth interviews are an effective tool for investigating personal, sensitive or confidential information which would be difficult to uncover with other methods, for example, standardised quantitative surveys (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Operating a farm or taking care of a lifestyle block is a physical and time-consuming process. As a researcher, it was also challenging at times to arrange times for the interviews with farmers or WWOOFers. I arranged a time and place for the interview at the participant's convenience. The interviews took place in various locations including a garden, a barn, a lounge, and a cow shed; many of the interviews happened outdoors. On average, each interview lasted for 80 minutes, with the shortest being 24 minutes and the longest being three hours and 20 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of participants. After my return to campus, I transcribed all the interviews for analysis.

Unstructured interviews based on the set of themes were deemed best for this research. The following themes represent the basis of the interviewing process:

1. Participant(s) background
2. Expectations and relationships
3. Overall experience
4. Final thoughts.

These interview themes were informed by the previous WWOOF research (Cronauer, 2012; Deville, 2011). The above mentioned themes were deemed significant to the research question for the following reasons. First, the social

construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experiences is informed by the origin of the participants and their experiences in WWOOFing as hosts or volunteers. Second, the stories of the participants' expectations and of their relationships with each other inform the social construction of their experiences. Third, participants presented stories of their overall WWOOFing experience and provided some final thoughts about their involvement in this volunteer farm tourism exchange programme. Finally, the themes served as a starting point of personal meaningful stories that socially construct participants' WWOOFing experience.

An interview with a conversational dialogue style allows participants to share their personal experiences and the researcher to gather 'rich' data (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2015). The interview process in this researcher was very flexible and I allowed participants to follow their thoughts (Jennings, 2010). However, sometimes participants departed from the theme as they were telling their personal stories of their experiences and exchange within the WWOOFing programme (Dupuis, 1999). Thus, some interviews turned into a dialogue. During the interviews with a dialogue format, I shared my experiences as a WWOOFer if that was asked for by the participants or prompted further explanation. At times, I needed to clarify my understanding. I used the following prompting questions:

1. Would you explain further?
2. Can you give an example?
3. Would you say more?
4. Is there anything else?
5. Please describe what you mean.

Overall, I tried to create a dialogue and develop a rapport that would allow participants to tell their stories, as much as possible, without interruption. However, to ensure the trustworthiness of the research, I tried to achieve clarity in my interpretation of what participants said through asking additional questions. To check the accuracy of my understanding, I constantly asked questions like "My understanding is that your first WWOOFing experience shaped your attitude towards your hosts, is that correct?"

3.5.3.2 Observation

As mentioned earlier, participant observation is often a preferred complementary tool that helps a qualitative researcher to provide depth to any data gathered through interviewing (Patton, 2002). Participant observation in

the field helps to reveal the story behind a participant's experiences, as the interviewer can track deeper meanings around the research questions (Jennings, 2010). As previously discussed in this section, for this research and in line with my philosophical values I chose to become one of the WWOOF volunteers myself and to participate in the construction of the WWOOFing experience. During the fieldwork stage, I was immersed in complete observation (Spradley, 1980) and got involved in all the activities with farmers and other WWOOFers. In alignment with the constructionist epistemology of this research, I chose to take the emic perspective to my research (Gallagher, 2012). Thus, I explored the social construction of the WWOOFing experience from the participants' perspective. During the fieldwork stage, I focused on the actual data provided by the participants and how the participants create meaning through experiencing WWOOFing as part of their subjective realities and how they assign meanings to the events that occurred on the farm. I endeavoured to understand and capture the emic essence of the events in the field as they actually occurred and to pay attention to the emerging themes or patterns as they appeared (Kottak, 1996).

Prior to my arriving on the farm, farmers and other WWOOFers present on the site were informed about my arrival and reminded about my dual role as a researcher and a WWOOFer. They then provided written consent, in accordance with the University of Waikato's ethical regulations for research. The aim of the participant observations in the field was to get the emic perspective of the research context and to view the actual behaviour of participants' and the values they exhibited based on my interpretation of their actions. I was able to capture their interactions and behaviours in a real-world setting. I observed behaviours and events, which participants might not have wished to discuss during the interviews. For example, to monitor the expenses, one of the hosts has kept 'delicatessen' in storage until only one WWOOFer left on the farm, although her children have asked for this food. My bricoleur position as a researcher and member of the WWOOF network allowed me to combine my academic knowledge from previous WWOOFing research (Azizi & Mostafanezhad, 2014; Deville & Wearing, 2013; McIntosh, 2009; Stehlik, 2002) with the hands-on insider perspective of WWOOFing gained during the fieldwork. This insider position, underpinned by constructionist philosophy, enabled me to build more meaningful relationships with participants and to explore the construction of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999).

Participant observation involves such activities as "fitting in, active seeing, short-term memory, informal interviewing, recording detailed field notes, and, perhaps most importantly, patience" (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002, p. 17). Field notes are the main way of capturing the data that is collected from participant observation. For this purpose, I carried my smartphone which allowed me to take photographs, record short audio memos, and write the notes. Every evening I tried to get some free time to transfer those notes into my researcher's journal. At times, doing so was challenging as I was either tired after a day of hard work on the farm or was involved in social activities with my farm hosts and other WWOOFers. Notes taken during the fieldwork captured the verbal and nonverbal interactions between farmers and WWOOFers, informal conversations with participants, and records of activities constituting the day on the farm. In my research, I see the field notes as both the raw data and the analysis of the data (Dewalt, Dewalt, & Wayland, 1998), as notes provide an accurate description of events happening on the farm and at times including my, researcher's, reflection on the event.

As a researcher in the field, I maintained an open, non-judgemental attitude towards participants, being interested in learning more about the relationships between farmers and WWOOFers, but also remaining open to the unexpected and flexible to challenges and making cultural mistakes (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). I approached participants observation in an unstructured way, hence I did not have any plan with specific information of the units that are to be observed and the information that is to be recorded (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011). During my stay on the farms, I was trying to understand events and interactions and why they had happened; I was trying to separate regular activities from irregular ones; I was trying to look for variety of ways to view an event in its entirety from multiple viewpoints (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011). Participant observation provided me with ways to check for nonverbal expressions and communication, to observe different styles of communication among participants, and to check for duration of various activities on the farm including work and social time (Schmuck, 2006).

During the data collection phase, I spent seven months on 10 farms. I interviewed 25 participants and conducted three LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops with 12 participants. I met other WWOOF farmers and volunteers by participating in social events, for example, Farmers' Markets. Specifically, I observed different styles of verbal and nonverbal communications. I recorded the cases when WWOOFers pretended that they do not understand instruction

of the task they were not interested in and pointed out to the language barrier. I recorded the times and the patterns available for work and social time. An interesting part of observation process was to observe and participate in social activities. For example, cooking, soap making, tramping, kayaking, playing games and more. During the data collection stage, I was able to live in the research context, which allowed me to facilitate a prolonged engagement. Prolonged fieldwork experience helps to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of research since the researcher has a chance to be immersed fully from the field research and explore the deeper meanings of the studied phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316).

As a complementary data collection method, participant observation permitted me to gain empathy through personal experiences (Patton, 2015). The data that I collected through participant observation helped me to check against participants' subjective reporting of what they believe the WWOOFing experience is. In this research participant observation was a useful tool for gaining an understanding of the physical, social and cultural WWOOFing contexts in which research participants live and socially construct their WWOOFing experiences. In addition, the method enabled to develop a familiarity with the values and philosophy of WWOOF movement and provided me with a nuanced understanding of context that can come only from personal experience. To sum up, in this research my dual role as a researcher and WWOOFer provided me with insights of WWOOFing experience and help to get deeper meanings and viewpoints of participants, as well as increased my understanding of their values and problems connected to WWOOFing experience. A summary of research notes related to participant observation is presented in Appendix H in form of a mind map extracted from the field journal.

3.5.3.3 LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Workshops

This research implemented an innovative and creative methodology, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®, to socially construct the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience using constructionist epistemology and metaphors to get a deeper understanding of the participants' ideals and their reality. The theory behind the LSP process was explained in section 3.6.4. Although LSP methodology is an open source product and all resources are available online, I chose to be certified as a facilitator so that I would use the method correctly. In 2013, I attended a week-long facilitator training course during which I learned LSP's methodology, core principles, and application techniques. I also received a facilitator's manual and ongoing support from the trainer for my first workshop.

The LEGO corporation has created separate kits specifically for LSP workshops (<http://www.LEGO.com/en-us/seriousplay/material>). However, it is possible to create one's own kit by using ordinary LEGO kit sets. The smallest kit, a Window Exploration Bag, is similar to the Starter Kit and is mainly used to give a short presentation on the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology or utilised for the initial skills-building in introductory workshops. The standard LSP Starter Kit is designed to be used individually. The kit provides the necessary LEGO bricks of different shapes, sizes and mobility required for the basic skills-building exercises. In addition, it facilitates building metaphors, creative story-making and applying imagination. The kit also contains the *Imaginopedia*, a booklet with exercises which helps to start off the workshop and build initial skills. The most used kit, Identity and Landscape (Figure 6), is designed to be used in conjunction with the Starter Kit for workshops averaging 3 – 5 hours with a maximum 12 participants.

The Identity and Landscape Kit includes:

1. Large special mix of LEGO bricks combined with DUPLO elements including animals,
2. extensive selection of special elements such as wheels, tyres, windows, trees, mini figure parts, sticks, globes, spiral tubes, ladders, and fences,
3. large selection of base plates, and
4. three orange plastic sorting trays.



Figure 6. Identity and Landscape Kit (2000430).

Source: From www.lego.com.

Additionally, facilitators can use a Connection Kit; it is necessary to support application techniques five, six and seven, as previously explained in section 3.4.4. By using this kit and these application techniques, participants focus on the relations and connections of built landscape through exploring how the 'system' responds to change. The connection kit cannot be used on its own. It is designed to be used in conjunction with the Starter Kit and the Identity and Landscape Kit and supports a group of up to 12 participants. The kit contains a large selection of long LEGO bricks and an extensive variety of connecting elements such as spiral tubes, ladders, fences, bridges, and strings.



Figure 7. Connection Kit (2000431).

Source: From www.lego.com.

As the resources for this study were limited, instead of ordering the Starter and Identity and Landscape kits directly from LEGO, I decided to purchase bulk LEGO bricks and create my own kits to fit within my budget. I purchased around 20kg of LEGO bricks, including various connection elements and DUPLO bricks. I prepared a customised Starter Kit for each participant based on the requirements that had been provided during the LSP training (Figure 8). Thus, the Starter Kit I created provided a well-chosen variety of the LEGO bricks needed for a workshop that aimed to go beyond a short introduction to the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology.

Brick Selection Criteria

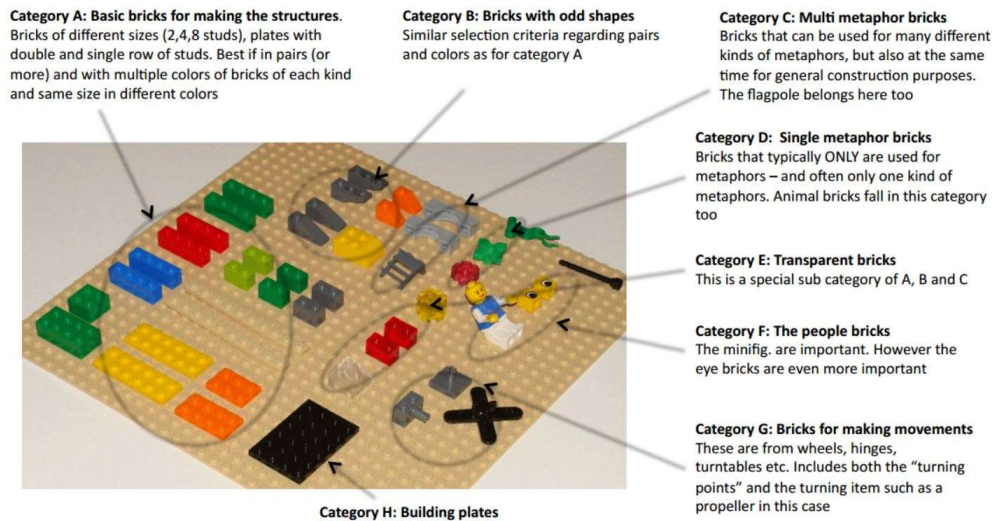


Figure 8. Brick Selection Criteria for LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®.

Source: Rassmussen Consulting. Used with permission.

The customised Starter Kit (Figure 9) which I decided to create for this research was used for introductory skills-building during the LSP workshops. In the later stages of the workshops, participants were encouraged to use all available LEGO bricks. Each custom-made kit contained bricks and elements of various shape, colour, and transparency and included a mini figure with accessories and Duplo elements. In particular, each starter kit contained:

1. A selection of basic LEGO bricks of different sizes (category A);
2. a few bricks with odd shapes (category B);
3. multimetaphor bricks (category C), i.e., a fence or a flag pole;
4. single metaphor bricks (category D), i.e., animals and plants;
5. a few transparent bricks of different shape (category E);
6. some ‘people bricks’ (category F), i.e., mini figures, accessories and ‘eye bricks’;
7. bricks for making movements (category E), i.e., wheels, hinges, and other rotating elements; and finally,
8. a building plate (category H).

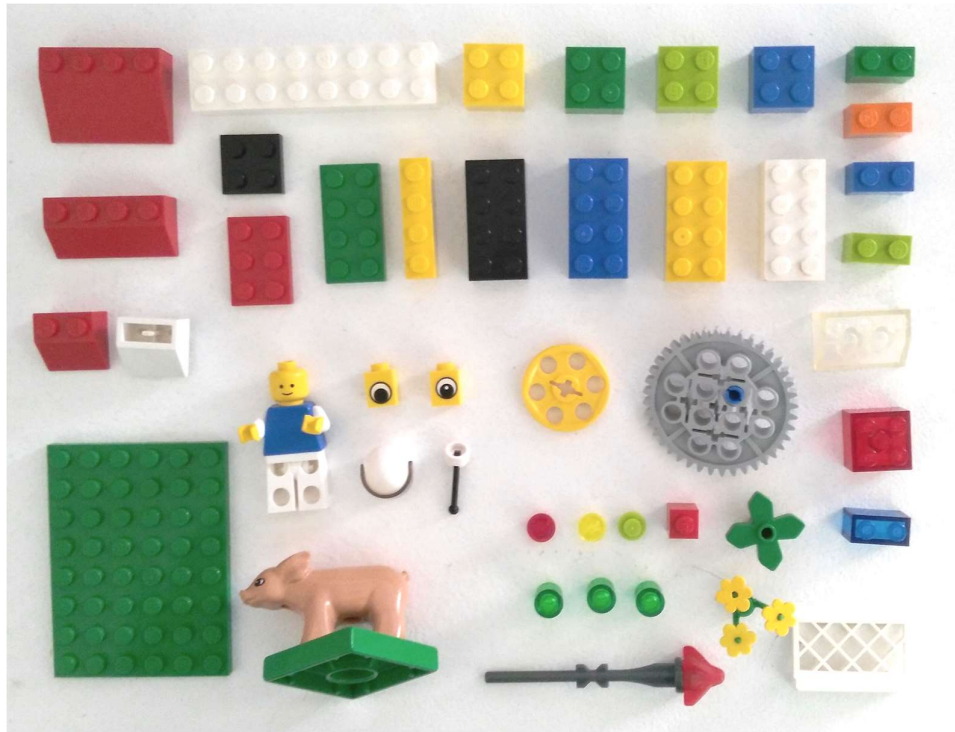


Figure 9. Customised Starter Kit.

During the fieldwork stage, I conducted three LSP workshops. Each of the workshops employed two application techniques: building individual models and stories and building a shared model. At the end of the each workshop participants built a shared model of the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience. The structure of LSP consent is underpinned by constructionist epistemology but requires facilitators 'purposeful questioning' towards the things that are commonly shared and accepted. All workshops were video- and audio-recorded. Table 2 provides a summary of the workshops and the participants.

Upon arrival on to each farm, I mentioned to the farmers and WWOOFers the possibility of conducting a workshop using LEGO bricks to co-construct an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience. Due to the busy nature of the WWOOFing experience, with its lack of free time and the physical tiredness of participants after a working day on the farm, it was challenging to motivate participants, especially farmers, to agree to take part in this exercise. Overall, five participants agreed to participate in both the interviews and LSP workshops. Seven participants joined only the workshops. In one case, a host couple's teenage children assisted in representing the farmer experience. As found in previous research (Gauntlett, 2007), participants are often sceptical towards the LSP method, the notion of 'playing with the LEGO bricks' and understanding of how LEGO bricks

could be a part of the research methodology. LSP is not an exception among creative methods, as previously researchers have reported participants' negative associations with creativity and reluctance towards participation in methods involving creative thinking, painting or producing a collage (Gauntlett, 2005, 2007; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009; Lundby, 2008; Mueller, Melwani, & Goncalo, 2012). Hence, to gain the trust of my participants and change their attitude towards new creative method I decided to modify the LSP methodology. I adapted the methodology to fit the current research in light of above mentioned limitations. In the workshops, I played a dual role: the role of the facilitator and the role of a participant.

Table 2. LSP Workshops Participants.

#	Name*	Country of Origin	Farmer/ WWOOFer	Workshop duration
Workshop 1				
1	Xavier	Spain	WWOOFer	04:12 hrs
2	Steffen	Germany	WWOOFer	
3	Yana*	Russia	WWOOFer	
4	Mary	New Zealand	Farmer	
5	James	New Zealand	Farmer	
Workshop 2				
1	Danny	Mexico	WWOOFer	05:03 hrs
2	Yana**	Russia	WWOOFer	
3	Linley	New Zealand	Farmer	
4	Mike	New Zealand	Farmer	
5	Chloe	New Zealand	Farmer	
6	Caleb	New Zealand	Farmer	
Workshop 3				
1	Samantha	USA	WWOOFer	03:30 hrs
2	Lauren	USA	WWOOFer	
3	Yana*	Russia	WWOOFer	
4	Charlotte	New Zealand	Farmer	

* Original names have been changed.

** I participated in each workshop representing a WWOOFer. Additionally, I also facilitated the workshop at the same time.

Before starting each workshop, I explained to participants the concept of LSP and performed some icebreaker and warm up exercises, for example as exercise to build a duck and a tower. During all the workshops, the participants were asked to build different models related to WWOOFing by using LEGO bricks first as an individual and then as a group. During each workshop, I posed questions as a facilitator, explaining to the participants that I was acting as the facilitator. When the participants were being encouraged to provide a metaphorical explanation of their model one after another, I always provided my answers last. I tried to notice what other participants had mentioned and not to mention something new, i.e., not to produce new knowledge. When I switched roles from a participant to a facilitator, I reminded the other participants that I was doing so (Reflexive Journal). After a series of LSP workshop steps, participants were invited to create a joint model consisting of individual models or parts of an individual model, that embraced the ideas and experiences of farmers (hosts) and WWOOFers (volunteers) at the same time. During this process, participants were encouraged to negotiate what parts of a model or models would constitute the final model, the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience. At this stage, I, as a participant, held back my ideas and let the participants determine the model and the story of the social construction of the WWOOFing experience. By the end of each workshop, the participants had constructed a story (a 'system' in LSP language) of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience (Figure 10).

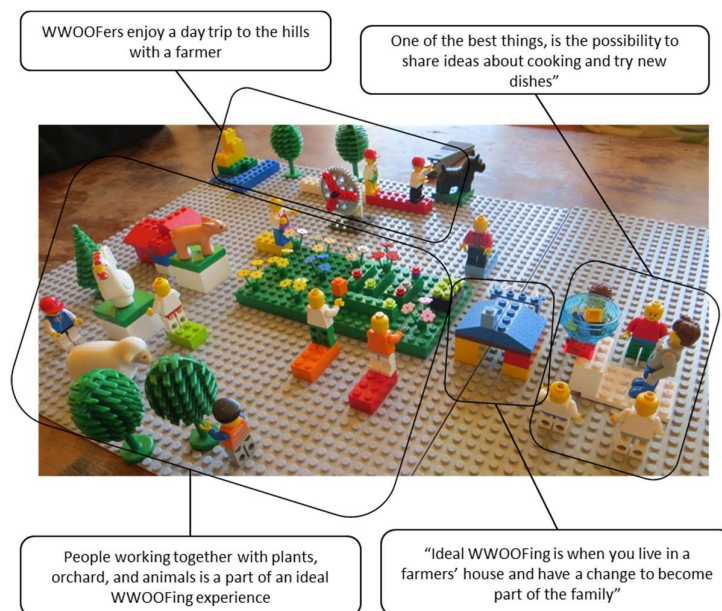


Figure 10 An example of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience model.

One of the key features of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is that, by being a part of the model, participants' feelings and experiences are externalised. Furthermore, the LSP process is inclusive, and everyone in a group gets a voice because all participants build a model and tell a story of their experiences. Lastly, LSP is very collaborative and allows participants to review everyone's perceptions by seeing and touching the model, as well as making the models fit together in a coherent and meaningful way. Banks (2007) argues that using visual data in qualitative research helps to "reveal some sociological insight that is not accessible by any other means" (p. 4). As a result, the LSP workshop empowered the participants to explore the social construction of the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience from the perspective of the farmers, the hosts, and the WWOOFers or volunteers.

3.5.3.4 Reflexive Journal

In my dual role as emic participant and researcher, it was important to have space for myself. As stated earlier, I started my reflexive research journal at the sample selection and participants' recruitment stage. In this journal, I captured my reflexive and critical thinking around the decision-making processes. I kept notes of how I established contact with the WWOOF New Zealand organisation, how I approached WWOOF farmers through the forum and WWOOF New Zealand newsletter as well as making notes on the success and the challenges I faced during this process. When the sample was recruited, I wrote down my aspirations about the next WWOOFing experience. Throughout the data collection process, I tried to take some time every day to keep records in the journal. I reflected on my experience as a WWOOF volunteer and observation of the interactions between farmers and other WWOOFers. After each interview, I tried to summarise and reflect on the process. The research journal helped me to maintain balance, to capture my experiences and emotions, to deal with my bricoleur role (Denzin, 1994b) as researcher and WWOOFer, and to acknowledge my influence on the research process.

This journal also helped me to overcome the challenges I encountered as a researcher or as a volunteer. The reflexive journal had a significant impact on me in two farming experiences that I, as a volunteer and a researcher, perceived as challenging. After the first stay on the farm, I wrote of my WWOOFing experience that it was rather "more negative than positive, but I learnt many things out of this, especially about communication" (Reflexive Journal). Although I thought that the farmer and I had agreed on my helping with the garden and helping to accommodate other WWOOFers, I was asked to

clean the whole house including cleaning the fireplace, vacuuming and steam washing the floors and dusting everywhere. At first:

It was quite ok, but the house was very dirty. I felt like she stopped cleaning four weeks ago when she knew that I am coming. The dirt becomes a crucial issue for me as WWOOFer. All day, I scrubbed the house where the dust layer was around one centimetre! I felt like a cleaner. In this case, I think it was kind of miscommunication. She is sad that she needs help with the garden and help with hosting other WWOOFers. I thought that I would contribute to cooking and cleaning but not cleaning the whole house and a car as a cleaning maid. But I actually never asked what would I clean while I will be on the farm. (Reflexive Journal)

Clearly, this experience was a mismatch of expectations and, as previously mentioned (McIntosh, 2009), a common phenomenon in WWOOFing. The second challenging experience happened two months later, and by that time, I was already an experienced WWOOFer. At one of the farms, I injured my wrists after weeding there for four days. I believed I had tendinitis as my wrists were inflamed. When I reported the injury to my host, he seemed not to care. I asked him for an easier job than digging out the roots of a bush, but he said that there was nothing to do apart from weeding. Since I could not do that, the farmer suggested I read a book in the afternoon and at that moment "I felt useless and also noticed he is quite unhappy with the whole situation (and we had another three days to go)" (Reflexive Journal). The next day, the only job I could do apart from weeding was cracking the new season's nuts. I endeavoured to be a 'good WWOOFer', so I did the job despite the pain. That day, after lunch, the farmer said that we need to talk.

At this moment, I knew that it is not going to end well. He stated that we have a communication problem. He noted that I overdid the job. In addition, he generally was unhappy. So, he could not really express it, but when I asked if he wants me to leave he said 'yes'. Nevertheless, he offered me to stay a night if I need to. His teenage kids were around the whole time and overheard the discussion. He also asked if I had feedback, but when I started to talk, he did not listen and interrupted me. When I was packing my car, his daughter came to me and apologised for her dad, by mentioning that it is not my fault. And when I wanted to buy some fruit for the way, his 12-year-old son refused to take the money and said that it is the least what he could do for me. This positive experience with the children gave me a good feeling and boosted my mood. However, I had no idea what went wrong. I guess for now I would prefer to think that he had some issues and he did not want to be a research subject. (Reflexive Journal)

To date, I am still not sure what went wrong. I believe there was no right or wrong in this situation; it was just a communication issue between two people. I respect my hosts, and accept that it is the hosts' right to withdraw from the study. At that moment, I thought that I had failed as WWOOFer and researcher. Thereafter, I made a great effort to make things work on every farm. I compared myself to other WWOOFers. I gained more knowledge about WWOOFing from previous research studies I read, I was aware of cultural challenges, and I tried to be a very hardworking volunteer. To overcome this unpleasant experience, I took emotional shelter at the nearby farm where I had previously interviewed the farmer and his partner and become acquainted with them as hosts. I spent three days there as a friend and a guest. In order not to be a burden, I brought some food with me, and I helped other WWOOFers a little. After my two negative experiences, I felt weak and tired, and I had frequent migraines. For the first two days as a guest on the farm, I had time to relax and reflect on my experience. When more WWOOFers arrived, the farm became more crowded and the house got dirtier; I felt that it was time to move on. After I left the farm, I travelled to the next city where I got cell phone connection. After a conversation with my chief supervisor and my husband, I decided to take time off from my research and to do something for me. I went tramping on the Queen Charlotte Track in the Marlborough Sounds, and this is what I wrote about my field work experience when there:

The whole fieldwork phase is getting more and more intense and stressful. This is not about difficult people or jobs. I feel it is about the lack of free time. On many farms, I had to work far more than 6 hours. Then, it was usually the dinnertime, which we spend together with the farmers and other WWOOFers. After doing the dishes, it was sometimes 10-11 pm, and I felt exhausted. I am not used to working so hard physically.

At times, I feel like I have no time for anything. I feel that I had to socialise with people because they were pretty interested in what I am doing and where I am from. And I just don't want to be impolite and go to bed, because hosts look for social contact and not for WWOOFers who disappear after the job is done. (Reflexive Journal)

Reflecting on the both situations, I realised only a few months later that nothing had gone wrong. I had just tried to be a good volunteer, and my hosts had tried to be a good host and to keep the balance in the house. As a researcher, I have to respect participants' opinion and privacy. My reflexive journal, therefore, created different types of dialogue and space for me (Fullagar & Wilson, 2012) and helped me to deal with difficult moments during the data collection.

Since I was collecting my data in remote regions, often without any internet or cell phone connection, the reflexive journal allowed me to have a conversation with my other self and to overcome difficulties. In two situations, the journal had a therapeutic effect on me and helped me through a challenging WWOOFing experience. Making reflexive notes almost every day in the journal was almost as if I was having a conversation with my supervisors or my husband. I felt like someone was listening to me and I felt heard, which did provide me with additional motivation for the next day in the field.

When I returned to my office, I started to transcribe the data. Over time, I added more reflexive insights and understandings describing my research journey to the journal. While making new notes, I concentrated on reviewing my roles as a researcher and a volunteer (Fullagar & Wilson, 2012; Hall, 2004). I reviewed the challenging and most fruitful moments of my data collection. I underlined ethical dilemmas and drew conclusions based on my experiences (Appendix H).

3.5.4 Data Analysis

Different methods of data collection and data analysis may produce different findings, and every researcher faces the challenge of finding the most appropriate study design and methods to answer specific research questions. There are two main approaches to data analysis; one is more systematic and organised (quantitative) and the other is more exploratory and imaginative (qualitative) (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research studies remain open and flexible and allow exploration of the phenomenon even after the data collection begins (Patton, 2002). Exploratory researchers read carefully through the data looking for keywords, trends, themes, and ideas (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). Qualitative data analysis can be messy, but it represents a flexible and reflexive approach, which allows the researcher to segment data into meaningful units while retaining a whole body of data (Tesch, 1990). Researchers argue that inductive approaches used in qualitative data analysis allow a more creative, imaginative, and reflexive approach that shapes the structure of a chosen method of data analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Thematic analysis is a flexible approach which can be applied across a range of epistemologies and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is an established tool for qualitative analysis which is based on searching through the collected data in order to find frequent patterns. The analysis moves "beyond

counting explicit words or phrases and focus[es] on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes" (Guest et al., 2012, p. 10). A theme can be defined as a group of related categories carrying similar meanings. Further, themes can be presented via codes, which are applied to summarise the data for advanced analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), there are six phases of thematic analysis: 1) familiarisation with data; 2) codes generation; 3) clustering of themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and, 6) producing the final report.

For this research, I chose a flexible and reflexive approach to data analysis when I started taking reflexive field notes. The data analysis for this research emerged from synthesising the events and information gained through interviewing and participant observation. While I was making reflexive notes, I started to notice the first commonalities and emerging themes. Thus, rather than following standard, more coherent thematic analysis (Patton, 1990), I chose to apply a more inductive and flexible approach to thematic analysis. This inductive approach involves extensive reflection on the potentially divergent perspectives, different positions, philosophies, and ideals behind the WWOOF phenomenon. After each interview, I made a reflexive summary of events and ideas. This process was followed by transcribing each interview, making colour-coded notes, re-reading the transcripts, and assigning initial codes. Finally, data analysis became more systematic and precise allowing code categories to emerge into themes.

An inductive thematic analysis allowed the emergence of themes from the information collected in the field. Thus, data analysis for this research is more flexible and data-driven rather than theory-driven (Patton, 1990). In this way, the inductive thematic analysis is underpinned by constructionist epistemology. In this research, participants do not represent merely the source of the data; rather, they are active co-creators of the research content (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). Implementing the inductive approach in this research allowed research findings to emerge from the frequent, prevailing, and significant themes inherent in the raw data provided by participants. As a part of the thematic analysis, I repeatedly returned to the transcripts of the interviews and LSP workshops and used my reflexive journal notes. I developed a coding frame and coded the transcripts. A systematic reading and coding of the data allowed major themes to emerge. Similarities and differences across initial themes and sub-themes were explored. Towards the end of the data analysis process, no

new themes emerged, which suggested that central themes had been identified. In addition to thematic analysis, I also considered alternative approaches.

One approach which could potentially fit this research is discourse analysis, which is closely associated with social constructionism (White, 2004). Discourse analysis underpinned by constructionist epistemology helps to understand how the reality is constructed, sustained, and experienced by people (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2015; Gergen, 1999). Discourse analysis is a reflexive, interpretive approach interested in language as a means of social construction (Burman & Parker, 1993; Rapley, 2007). In discourse studies, language is seen as the medium for the social construction of reality. In tourism studies, discourse analysis is increasing in popularity. For example, Thurlow and Jaworski (2003) analysed in-flight magazines in order to discover what the marketing strategies of airlines promise tourists. Feighery (2006a) investigated the textual representation of ethnocultural diversity in information materials of the official tourism organisations in England, while Stamou and Paraskevopoulos (2006) examined how protected areas are constructed as tourism destinations in Greek magazines. Caruana and Crane (2011) explored the concept of 'freedom' in tourism texts across different types of tourism experience, and Small and Harris (2012) used critical discourse analysis to investigate the airline experiences of obese and nonobese passengers and attempt to further public discussion on this issue, and thus create change. For this research, discourse analysis was deemed as an inappropriate method as language, power, and historical context have not so far been central features in understanding the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. However, discourse analysis might be an attractive method through which to analyse the WWOOF network, if discourses, language, and power were of primary interest.

Content analysis and text analysis were two of the other techniques considered for analysing the data in this research. Content analysis is "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description" of data (Berelson, 1952, p. 18), which has its roots in positivism. Content analysis "aims to produce quantitative accounts of the raw materials in terms of categories specified by the rules" (Bryman, 2012, p. 290). Several tourism scholars have examined tourism journals trends using content analysis (Baloglu & Assante, 1999; Mehmetoglu, 2004; Reid & Andereck, 1989; Xiao & Smith, 2006; Yoo & Weber, 2005). Others have applied this technique to analyse the content of newspapers regarding tourism and gambling (Nickerson, 1995), or to conduct

destination image research by analysing texts from tourism websites and newspaper articles (Stepchenkova, Kirilenko, & Morrison, 2009). Closely connected to content analysis is the text analysis approach.

Text analysis is a "systematic dissection of a textual unity in its constituent parts and the study of those parts in relation to each other" (Sanders & Sanders, 2006, p. 600). Text analysis focuses on the linguistic elements of the text and aims to understand how the texts are structured (Sanders & Sanders, 2006). Recent tourism scholars have used text analysis to analyse online content. For example, Xiang, Gretzel, and Fesenmaier (2009) conducted a study with a focus on the semantic representation of tourism on the internet, and Volo (2010) examined how tourists' experiences, mentioned in blogs, influence a prospective tourist's decisions. Content and text analysis are deemed as potentially inappropriate for investigating the WWOOF phenomenon, as content analysis, arguably, leaves little room for reflexivity and is keener on quantitative representation than on discovering meanings. In turn, text analysis is deemed as an inappropriate tool as it focuses particularly on a text's construction rather than understanding the context that shaped the information contained in the text.

Semiotics offers a further method of data analysis for a content-driven study. Semiotic analysis is grounded in linguistics and the social sciences (Manning, 1987) and is focused on the analysis of signs through the forms of language. It values the relationship between language and human behaviour. Semiotic analysis studies see signs and symbols not only in language (both written and spoken forms) but also in rituals, culture, images, and art. According to Eco (1976) "...semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign" (p. 7) including words, images, actions, and objects, as long as they can be recorded in some way. The main difference between semiotics and other qualitative approaches is that it is focused not on an individual or a group but rather on an understanding of signs (Keegan, 2009). Myers (2009) assumes that the main disadvantage of semiotics "is the tendency to focus solely on the structures of meaning and to treat people as someone passive" (p.205). Although semiotics is keen on the meaning of the signs, "it has a tendency to become formalistic and ignore the way in which people actively create meaning" (Myers, 2009, p. 205). Thus, this approach is deemed as potentially inappropriate for studying the socially constructed reality of WWOOFing, where every single participant's voice is important. As such, thematic analysis was deemed the most appropriate method for analysis.

3.5.4.1 The Thematic Analysis Process

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Boyatzis (1998) defines thematic analysis as a process for “encoding qualitative information”. There are several steps in thematic analysis.

The first step in the data analysis is to get a sense of the full data set while also considering the aim and purpose of the research. During this process, I reflected on questions such as: “What is going on? What are people doing? What is the person doing? What do these actions/statements take for granted? How do structure and context serve to support, maintain, impede or change these actions and statements?” (Charmaz, 1995, p. 38). When I started to transcribe the interviews, I created a table (Table 5) where I noted outstanding thoughts, situations or events. I also transferred some field notes from the journal into this table. At this stage of the analysis, the reflexive field journal helped me to refresh my thoughts and to remind me that the events happened in the field.

Table 3. Transcribing Template.

Interview #1	Comments
<p>...</p> <p>grow tomatoes without “azurte” [chemical element]. If you want tomatoes, you do that.</p> <p>But one day, for example, I go to a place and have one cow...para las barcas, atar, una cuerda [boats for tying a rope], it is not possible it is not possible in ecological agriculture, but it must be one week like that because they must do that. I think that for me it is ok. I like the ecological things, but sometimes you can not be very strict because the reality you must do another thing...I do not know.</p> <p>...</p>	<p><i>Switches to Spanish, difficult to explain things.</i></p> <p><i>Further only a translation.</i></p>

Once I had transcribed an interview, I tried to summarise outstanding ideas, situations or events described by the participant on a separate sheet of paper (Figure 11). The colours used in these sheets were not assigned on purpose but rather served to distinguish different thoughts from each other. However, later on, when the themes started to emerge I used a particular colour for a particular theme. I tried to write the summary concurrently with the transcribing of the chosen interview.

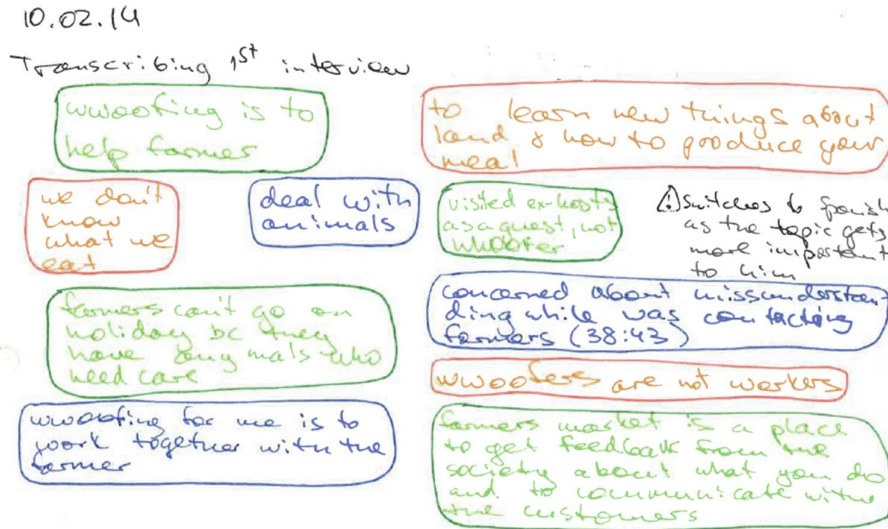


Figure 11. Graphical Interview Summary.

The second step I undertook of the inductive thematic analysis was to establish convergence of data. At this stage, I started to look for patterns, themes, and categories in the data in order to find and group commonalities. To achieve this end, I read my transcripts and summaries of the interviews highlighting relevant passages throughout the document. First, I highlighted sections related to the transcripts in yellow; those sections were coded when I reread the transcript. To visualise the codes, I wrote some of the codes on flipchart paper as a way to uncover emerging themes (Figure 12). When I revisited the data, and I saw commonalities and how some codes were relating to each other. In this way, the first themes started to emerge.

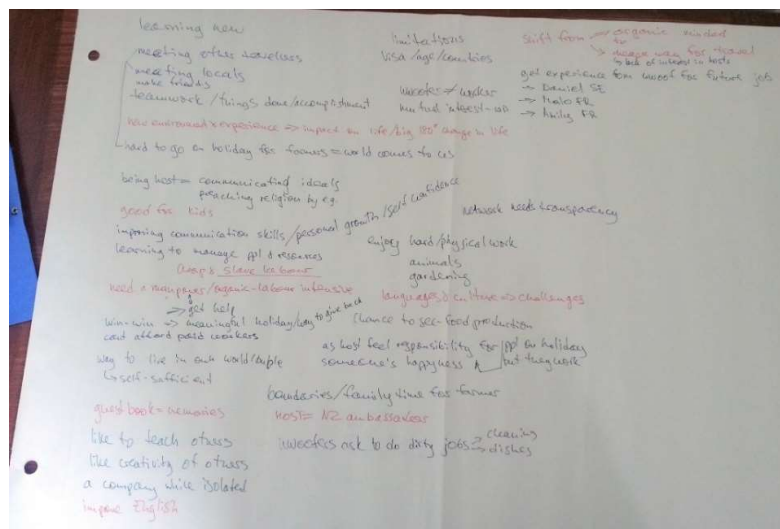


Figure 12. Initial Codes on a Flipchart Paper.

I was forming conclusions drawing on examples of each theme from the data. Hence, I was involved in "ongoing reflexive dialogue" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82) while making a decision on themes which underpin the findings of this thesis. At the end of the thematic analysis, I saw 12 common areas emerging in the data obtained from participants interviews. To get more clarity from the data, I tried another creative qualitative tool, Ketso, to help me establish final themes. Initially, four themes mentioned in Figure 15 emerged as outstanding themes but the theme 'organisational communication of ethics' was removed as a separate theme because the notion of ethics is present across all themes.

The Ketso session process is described in greater detail in section, 3.5.4.2. Prior to starting a Ketso session, I had determined twelve common areas in my data. In this study, Ketso was only used to complement the data analysis and was not used with participants. During the first Ketso session, I rearranged the codes and confirmed commonalities. As a result of the second session, I saw eight themes emerging. By further analysing and revisiting the text and the notes from my researcher's journal I focused on the data

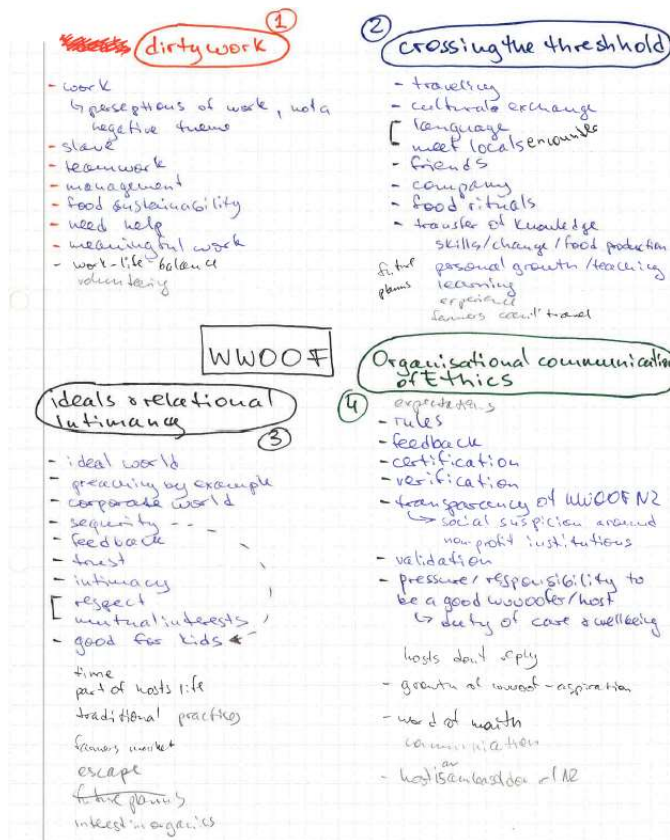


Figure 15. Mind Map of Codes.

After the third Ketso session, I noticed four predominant themes. I also tried to give a graphical presentation of the themes and create a mind map of the final themes (Figure 15). This mind map helped me to focus on the links and relationships between developing themes. Creating a mind map of emerging themes I was able to sort my thoughts and ideas through and assisted in further categorisation of the sub-themes.

The data gained through the LSP workshops were analysed separately as the LSP workshops were used to answer a separate research question, specifically the LSP methodology was used to understand an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience as it is constructed by farmers and WWOOFers. In this thesis research, LSP thus served as a complementary tool to explore the distinct experiences of research participants. Some participants mentioned their preferred/ideal WWOOFing scenario or experience. Generally, there are many overlaps between the interviews and the LSP workshop outcomes as participants provided the examples of their real experiences. During the LSP workshops participants answered a separate research question and no contradictions were noted. After each workshop, I transcribed the audio and video recordings of the workshops and entered my reflexive notes as comments. The inductive approach to thematic analysis enable me to interpret and elucidate meanings created by the participants. Undergoing the steps of the thematic analysis described above two main themes related to an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience emerged from the data. They are: people and sharing (work, food, social time and rules). Techniques used for the analysis of the interviews, including mind maps and word clouds were used to for the analysis of the LSP workshops too (Appendix I).

3.5.4.2 Ketso Process

Ketso is a facilitated workshop technique. The word 'ketso' means 'action' in Lesotho the language of the African country Lesotho where it was created in 1995. Ketso is a toolkit which enables people to think and work together more productively (Tippett, 2013; Tippett & How, 2011). Originating from the education and environmental studies discipline, the Ketso toolkit has been used in various disciplines to create engagement, co-learning and collaborative thinking (McIntosh & Cockburn-Wooten, 2016). Ketso is used on six continents across the world, and workshop themes have included community-led planning and regeneration, engaging stakeholders on behalf of local and government agencies, corporate training, developing new businesses, team building, student-led learning, and providing tools for teachers and researchers (Tippett & How, 2011). Ketso has been identified as a participatory action research tool

within the social sciences (Tippett, Handley, & Ravetz, 2007). The technique is based on theories of creative thinking (De Bono, 2009), mind mapping (Buzan & Buzan, 2006), experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999).

As a facilitated workshop technique, aligned with constructionist epistemology of this thesis, Ketso represents an inclusive tool which helps to unleash participants' creativity. A standard Ketso kit (www.ketso.com) consists of a large felt mat, grid mat, coloured plastic 'leaves' and icons, felt stripes or 'branches', marking pens with water soluble ink, and the guide. The leaves, branches, and icons are movable and attach to felt with Velcro. The kit (Figure 16) is sustainable; all items are reusable, colourful, tactile and represent an accessible tool. The kit could be used by illiterate participants or colour-blind people.



Figure 16. Ketso Kit.

Source: www.ketso.com. Used with permission.

The Ketso workshop is based on a metaphorical analogy with a tree. The analogy with tree provides a universal understanding of workshop structure. Some participants of previous Ketso workshops agreed that the metaphorical use of a tree was excellent at cultivating a natural flow of discussion during the

workshop (Lombard, 2016). The centrepiece of the workshop is represented by the 'trunk'; the 'branches' represent themes, and the 'leaves' represent different ideas expressed by the participants. Usually, the Ketso session starts with a warm-up question. The questions guiding the session theme are asked one by one. To answer each question, participants are allocated a specific time frame, for example, 10-15 minutes. Commonly, each session has four key stages (Figure 17). Each stage is associated with a different question and a leaf colour. To answer the question, participants write/draw the answer onto the leaf and place it on a relevant branch (or theme).

At the first stage of the session, participants receive brown leaves, which represent soil on which ideas will grow. Participants could be asked the following questions: What works well? What do people already do that is effective? What is good about what we do now? After some time for generating ideas in silence, participants are asked to share their ideas one after another.



Figure 17. Stages of Ketso Session.

Source: www.ketso.com. Used with permission.

The next stage is represented by green leaves and aims to generate new and creative ideas. Participants are encouraged to provide an answer to what could be done differently. The metaphor here is green shoots as newly growing ideas. If during the sharing stage participants mention similar ideas, they may be clustered on a branch. The third stage of the session uses grey leaves, which represent challenges and barriers. Thinking of a tree analogy, grey leaves represent clouds hiding the sun and getting in the way of what participants are aiming to achieve. At this stage, participants need to answer the following

questions: What are the key barriers and challenges? What gets in the way or makes things difficult? To overcome these challenges, participants are invited to use green leaves to identify particular solutions to those problems. The last stage of the session relates to the coming out of bright sunshine that drives growth and keeps everything going. Here the questions are focused on the goals which participants would like to achieve in the future.

Ketso encourages participants to engage in productive dialogue. When participants see their ideas taking shape, alongside all the thoughts of the other participants, they are encouraged to move the leaves in order to see the commonalities and/or different points of view and to make new connections (Tippett & How, 2011). In research, Ketso is used as a tool for data collection and as a tool for PhD students' training and development. As such, it can be used by individuals in planning action. For this research, instead of using Ketso with my participants, I used it as an analysis tool which helped me to define the themes and guide the thematic analysis. There is future scope to further examine the potential of applying the Ketso tool kit in this way.

After the data were analysed with the help of thematic analysis, I decided to complement and deepen the analysis with Ketso. When I had finished transcribing and coding, I had a large variety of codes, which were initially grouped into 12 common areas. Ketso helped me to achieve clarification and to define four final themes by focusing my attention to the key aspects. At this stage of the research, I spent two months as a visiting researcher at the University of Glasgow, working together with my third supervisor, Professor Alison Phipps. Under the supervision and guidance of Alison Phipps, who is a very experienced facilitator of the Ketso technique, I ran three Ketso sessions for myself to get more clarity on my data.

As the main topic of my first Ketso session, I chose to focus on relationships between farmers and WWOOFers. First, I wrote my codes on brown leaves. Then I tried to group them thematically and used green leaves. I tried to draw patterns across the data by using grey leaves representing differences or challenges. I used yellow leaves to capture emerging themes. As an outcome of the first session, I confirmed 12 common areas across the whole data. Then, at the second Ketso session, I repeated the procedure and rearranged the codes. As result of the second session, I saw eight themes emerging. After two sessions, I decided to take a break from the data and went on a writing retreat. I spent a week in the Scottish Highlands countryside. During this writing retreat,

I focused on my reflexive journal. Every morning I went for a long walk in the woods, and in the afternoon I focused on writing my journal and revisiting the transcripts and the field notes. Upon my return to Glasgow, I ran a third Ketso session (Figure 18). Ketso helped me to rearrange the codes and to come up with four themes: dirt, crossing the threshold, ideals, and ethics.

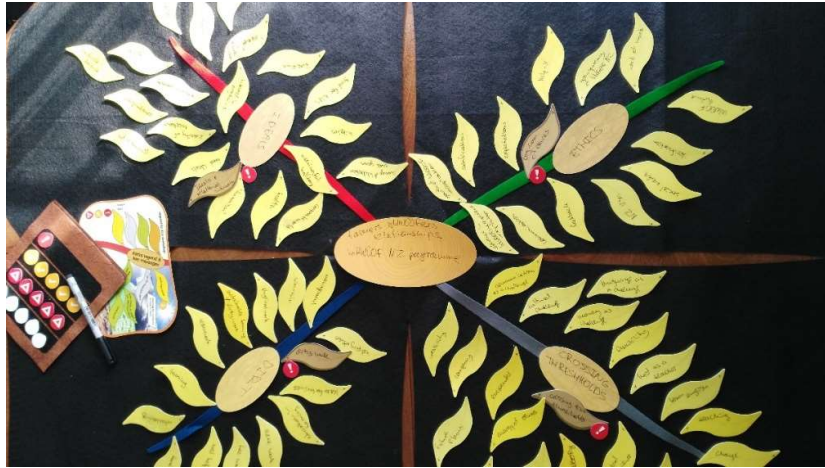


Figure 18. Ketso Session: Four Themes.

3.5.4.3 Benefits of Analytical Tools

Every research method has its strengths and weaknesses. To ensure the trustworthiness in this research, I decided to combine two analysis methods which mutually benefit each other (Guba, 1981). Thematic analysis enables the researcher to identify patterns of meaning across the data that provide an answer to the research question. Commonalities between the data are identified through the following steps: precise familiarisation with data by revisiting the context, data coding, and theme development and revision (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Two main benefits of thematic analysis are that it provides a systematic element to data analysis and provides an opportunity to understand the potential of any issue more widely (Marks & Yardley, 2004). Although thematic analysis moves beyond counting words and focuses on identifying and describing implicit and explicit ideas (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008), it could be hidden, subjective, and unable to address the complications of reflective research.

These limitations of thematic analysis could, however, be filled by further revisiting the data with Ketso methodology. Ketso enabled me to focus my thinking and to see the deeper connections between different codes (Tippett & How, 2011). Using this tool allowed me to merge the common patterns into

four key themes by following the logical path outlined in the Ketso methodology. With the help of this creative tool, I was able to get a deeper understanding of themes, to draw connections, to prioritise themes, and to find patterns which were previously overlooked. Furthermore, to ensure the trustworthiness of this qualitative method, I was involved in an active discussion of the research's findings with my superior, Alison Phipps, who is an expert in Ketso methodology.

3.6 Trustworthiness and Credibility of the Research

Each paradigm has its own means of judging the quality of research (Healy & Perry, 2000). Contrasting with quantitative researchers who seek prediction and generalisation of findings, qualitative researchers search for illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations (Hoepfl, 1997). Thus, the qualitative researcher requires different tools to ensure the quality of research. While the terms reliability and validity are rooted in the positivist perspective (Bryman, 2016), Patton (2002) emphasises that validity and reliability are two crucial issues which a qualitative researcher should bear in mind while designing research, analysing results, and evaluating the quality of research. These points relate to the question "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290).

On the one hand, some qualitative researchers have argued that the concepts of reliability and validity are not applicable to qualitative research (Seale, 1999); on the other hand, the need for a quality check in qualitative studies has been raised in the research community (Flick, 2007). Consequently, various approaches to measure the quality of research were developed and often new terms invented such as quality, rigor, and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mishler, 1990; Morse, Swanson, & Kuzel, 2001; Sandelowski, 1995; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001). Guba (1981) initiated a discussion on criteria for assessing the quality of naturalistic inquiries. Following this discussion, Lincoln and Guba (1985) determined the four aspects of trustworthiness in the qualitative paradigms: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria depend on a contradictory philosophical position, based on the belief in "multiple constructed realities," rather than a "single tangible reality" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 295), which is the essential part of the constructionist paradigm. In their later work, a fifth criterion to ensure the quality of research, authenticity, was added (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The reliability and validity, or speaking in qualitative terms, the

trustworthiness and credibility of this research were established through several frameworks (Shenton, 2004; Wearing & Wearing, 2001). Although there is no single established criterion to assess the trustworthiness in qualitative research, this section attempts to validate the research findings based on indicators for quality used in recent qualitative studies (Decrop, 2004; Richardson & Adams St Pierre, 2005; Shenton, 2004).

First, throughout the research process, I had frequent debriefing sessions with my New Zealand-based supervisors. To work closely with my third supervisor, I spent two months at the University of Glasgow during the data analysis stage. With my supervisors, I have discussed alternative approaches to data collection, tested creative research tools, and developed ideas and interpretations. Additionally, I sought the advice of Professor David Gauntlett, who is a pioneer of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology in higher education and research. I visited David in London, while I was staying in the United Kingdom. This meeting lend me key insights into the LSP as a research technique and provided helpful advice on analysis of LSP models produced by my participants.

Secondly, I tried to ensure the trustworthiness of this research project through peer scrutiny. Throughout my PhD years, I sought opportunities to present my research at national and international conferences and symposiums (Shenton, 2004). In June 2015, I presented my key themes and my methodological approach to the Critical Tourism Studies (CTS) Conference. Furthermore, I became an active practitioner of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology, and in addition to using it in this research, I have used it in teaching at the Waikato Management School. Besides, I co-facilitated Ketso sessions at the university and at the CTS 2015 Conference. These experiences helped me to strengthen my arguments in the light of the comments made by other researchers.

Third, I sought to evaluate my research through a reflexive research journal. This approach to research reflects my sincerity and transparency in the writing of this research. I kept the researcher journal throughout my research. Among other entries, I made records of initial impressions of the data collection in terms of reflections on the process and methods used and patterns appearing to emerge in the data. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), such researcher comments can play a key role in 'progressive subjectivity'. In other words, watching the researcher develop theoretical constructions is considered critical to establishing the credibility of the research.

Fourth, I spent a prolonged period of time in the field as a WWOOF volunteer and researcher. I lived and volunteered on the farms for 7 months between October 2013 and April 2014, being one of the participants in the research settings. The engagement of the researcher in the research setting fits with the constructionist epistemology of this research, promotes the trustworthiness and credibility of the research, and ensures prolonged engagement with research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Furthermore, the use of the participants' own words provides 'thick description' of the relationships between farmers and WWOOFers (Geertz, 1973; Ryle, 2009). These 'thick descriptions' not only explain the participants' experiences but also set the context for the experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consequently, the events mentioned in the research become meaningful to an outside reader as they do not tell the reader what to think, but permit the reader arrive at her/his own opinion and thus align with the philosophic assumptions which underpin this research.

Fifth, my reciprocity with research participants is another factor ensuring the trustworthiness of the research (Tracy, 2010). Reciprocity as a concept embraces constructivist ontology and epistemology and determines the "unstable or difficult-to-identify boundaries of perspective, power, and position" (Trainor & Bouchard, 2013, p. 988). Therefore, for a researcher, it is crucial to bear in mind that, despite becoming close or even friends with some participants in the study, people may change their minds, back out, not want to talk to the researcher, or participate in the study anymore (Ellis, 2007). Thus, it is important to have a backup plan and to include multiple voices to understand how the experiences in the WWOOFing phenomenon are co-constructed by farmers and WWOOFers. In my research, I have encountered two critical moments in terms of reciprocity and trust; these were earlier described in section 3.7.3.

Additionally, a rapport established with the participants contributes to the trustworthiness of the research and gaining the trust, empathy, understanding, mutual respect and, possibly, the friendship of participants (Springwood & King, 2001). The connection with participants and the unstructured, conversational interview style permitted me to go gather rich data (Jennings, 2001), as I allowed participants to lead me through their thoughts and experiences in WWOOFing rather than strictly following a predefined interview schedule. The personal relationships and the level of rapport established with participants drove me to seek a balance between the role of 'insider' and 'outsider' in the research. During the fieldwork, I constantly negotiated my role and asked

myself questions like: "Am I acting as a WWOOFer or a researcher now?" At times, I felt connected more with some WWOOFers, who had lived or were living through similar positive and negative experiences to my own. I felt connected, for example, with those who worked close to their hosts and enjoyed conversations, who were asked to share special moments like a birthday with the farmers' family, or those who had to work long hours or do things they did not enjoy. In contrast, I could not relate to the comments of farmers who talked about their experiences with the volunteers, as I did not share this experience with them. During those situations, I felt more like a researcher than a WWOOFer. I felt that it was important to be able to step back as a volunteer and try to understand the phenomenon as a researcher. To negotiate my dualistic role, I often referred to my reflexive journal and put my thoughts down on paper. Acker (2001) points out that "...none of us always and forever either insider[s] or outsider[s]. Our multiple subjectivities allow us to be both insiders and outsiders simultaneously, and to shift back and forth, not quite at will, but with some degree of agency" (p. 109).

The research could also be validated by the combination of methods used in this research. The triangulation or crystallisation (Richardson & Adams St Pierre, 2005) of this research project is ensured through its application of multiple methods, such as interviewing, participant observation and LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®, as well as mind maps and Ketso methodology. Additionally, the use of multiple sources of data, including interviews, field notes, and creative LSP artefacts provide 'thick descriptions' of the phenomenon and, therefore, more credible and richer findings. Closely connected to the concept of crystallisation is the *multivocality* of research, which provides multiple voices to understand the research phenomenon (Tracy, 2010). Multivocality is grounded in the practice of 'verstehen', a practice of analysing social phenomena from the participants' points of view and which seeks multiple voices to gain a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon. In this research, rather than solely trying to understand the farmers (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001) or WWOOFers (Miller & Mair, 2015b), I have combined the understanding of relationships in WWOOFing by portraying the farmers and WWOOFers' opinions, underpinned by my reflexive comments.

Furthermore, the research trustworthiness and credibility are enhanced by the significance and the contribution of the research. The relevance of the research topic was discussed in Chapter Two. Farming is an essential component of the New Zealand economy, and the tourist sector is second to the dairy industry in

terms of foreign exchange earnings (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). Thus, it is important to understand the relationships within the WWOOFing network in New Zealand, which represents the second oldest and third largest WWOOF network worldwide (International WWOOF Association, 2013). It is time to move away from the consideration that hosts and guests interact only on an economic level, since non-commercial tourism networks like WWOOF or CouchSurfing are increasing in popularity. Moreover, it is essential for tourism scholars to understand what moves people and to hear the voices of non-commercial tourists as well as to understand what shapes their realities. In addition, by applying the innovative LSP methodology (Wengel et al., 2016) to gain a deeper understanding of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience and the Ketso toolkit (McIntosh & Cockburn-Wooten, 2016; Zhang, Lynch, McIntosh, & Wengel, 2016) to crystallise the research findings, this thesis aims to produce methodological contributions to the tourism scholarship, as further described in the concluding chapter.

Finally, the credibility of the research is ensured by the ethical standards of the University of Waikato. Ethical procedures such as providing confidentiality for participants and offering them a chance to withdraw from the research leads to more credible data. Relational ethics (Ellis, 2007) ensures the researcher's self-consciousness, mindfulness of their character, actions and consequences for research participants. Thus, the aim of this section has been to show that the trustworthiness and the credibility of this research were established through several frameworks, in order to validate the research in the eyes of the outside reader.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues exist in any research project as knowledge construction needs to be morally responsible towards the research participants. Research involving humans includes a tension between the aims of the research and the rights of participants to maintain privacy. Thus, the existence of issues of power relations between researcher and participants are of importance (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). Research focused on exploring, examining, and describing people in their 'natural environment' involves complex ethics issues. Most of the research in western cultures is guided by standardised bureaucratic ethical procedures involving codes and consent, confidentiality, and trust (Ryen, 2016).

Ryen (2016) calls for sensitivity in implementing and adopting a variation of the universal western research ethics standards in qualitative research, for

example, for a specific culture or participants group, when needed. In this research project, prior to the data collection, I applied for and received approval from the Waikato Management School Ethics Committee. When preparing the ethics application, I considered the potential ethical issues that could be anticipated in this research project such as informed consent from the participants, confidentiality, data generation and analysis strategies, the relationship between me as a researcher and my participants, as well as ways of reporting the research results.

As my research involved interactions with participants through interviewing, participant observation, and LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops, I have followed the research ethics obligations and practices of the University of Waikato. I applied for ethical approval from the ethics committee at two stages: first, at the stage of writing the research proposal and later I submitted an updated ethics application before beginning the data collection process. In both cases, I was granted ethics approval by the Waikato Management School Ethics Committee. I then engaged myself into establishing the connection with WWOOF New Zealand network organisers, WWOOF farmers, and WWOOF volunteers. I informed my prospective participants about my research and asked for their permission to carry out the research at particular locations. The participants were guaranteed the protection of their privacy and identities. Real names and exact locations of the farms are not named in this study. Before data collection, participants received the information sheet (Appendix C and Appendix D), a general guide to the themes of the interviews (Appendix E) and information about LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops (Appendix F). All of the participants in this research signed a consent form (Appendix G).

My primary concern in this research study was to conduct the research in an ethical and transparent manner. Every time I arrived at a new farm, I introduced myself as a researcher and as a volunteer to the people present on the farm. I explicitly explained my dualistic roles to my participants. I highlighted what I was going to do and how I was going to conduct my research. I informed my hosts and other WWOOFers that I might take some notes in public while we are working on the farm (Dewalt et al., 1998). I also asked all hosts to allow me some free time in the evening so that I could sit down in a quiet environment and enter reflexive notes into my research journal. However, sometimes doing so was quite challenging: it was hard to have some privacy, or I was just physically tired after a day of work on a farm, as I am not used to physical labour.

Dewalt et al. (1998) point out that it is common for researchers who spend an extended period in the field to establish relationships or even friendships with participants, some of which may exist for a lifetime, while others may exist only for the duration of the research project. I had an ethical concern regarding the relationships developing during the data collection. Whilst active in the field, I tried to develop close relationships with my participants as a WWOOFer, yet I also sought to maintain my role as a researcher. Currently, I am still in contact with the WWOOF New Zealand network organisers and a few hosts. I have also had some contact with other WWOOFers but maintaining a friendship is rather challenging since most of my WWOOFer participants have left the country. However, I have revisited two hosts, and I think that we might have developed a friendship since we do have many things in common and enjoy each other's company.

3.8 Research Limitations

Although this research based on interviews, participant observation, and LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops provides rich data of participants' subjective experiences, it also has several difficulties and limitations. Location, language, the technology used to record interviews and workshops, and the methodology of the LSP and Ketso techniques are among key limitations of this research. First, the most obvious limitation of this study is its geographical location in New Zealand. However, it is hoped that the study will give valuable insights into understanding of the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experiences, which might be compared later to other WWOOF contexts. New Zealand was the second country to introduce WWOOFing (Nimmo, 2001) and has high numbers of farms and WWOOFers. The results of the study may later be compared to the other WWOOF international networks to gain a broader overview of the WWOOFing experience worldwide.

A further limitation is related to the organic certification. The initial sampling plan was to visit only farms which have obtained any one of the official organic certifications available in New Zealand. This decision was deemed as important because the 'organic nature' of farming was the founding idea of the WWOOF movement. Although, in reality, most of the farms within WWOOF New Zealand do operate on organic principles, and, as a rule only farms which sell their produce or lease their land for grazing animals obtain organic certification. Farmers have admitted that certification is a complicated, costly bureaucratic procedure. The organic certification is only beneficial if it allows the gaining of

more monetary value for their farming products or land. Therefore, most of the small scale WWOOF farmers are not organically certified. Thus, this needs to be born in mind when reviewing the ideals and construction of the nature of the WWOOF experience reported in the thesis.

Two further limitations in this study are related to creative and innovative methods, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® and Ketso. Like all research methods, LSP also has its challenges. The research process revealed that participants more accustomed to LEGO bricks tend to build more complicated models. This is believed to have a potential to unbalance the workshop flow if less skilled participants start to compare their models. Hence, a role of the facilitator becomes crucial in this process. Another difficulty connected to the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology. As mentioned in section 3.4.4., it was challenging to recruit participants at the farms due to the farmers' and volunteers' lack of free time and their physical tiredness. It is understandable that people wanted to relax, get rest, and enjoy their spare time after a day of hard work on the farm. Moreover, recruitment for the LSP workshops was challenging because some of the participants were sceptical about LEGO. LEGO was a toy for them or they were not familiar with this construction toy. Hence, those participants failed to perceive that LEGO is just a medium in this methodology and the core process is focused on participants' stories, experiences, and sharing those experiences with each other. Additionally, the method requires specific resources such as the LSP kit, a skilled facilitator, appropriate space, and dedication of time. The LSP kit used for this research counted about 20 kilogram of LEGO and was packed as an extra-large suitcase. Thus, this method has limited application for research conducted in the field.

The main limitations of Ketso methodology in this research process echo the LSP limitations in terms of the special kit availability, skilled facilitator as well as the space and time for the running the sessionar workshop. In previous studies, some research participants found Ketso to be a difficult and unsettling concept because of its inductive nature (McIntosh, Cockburn-Wootten, 2016). However, being an experienced facilitator in Ketso I could not relate to the above mentioned limitations. But, I found it difficult to facilitate a one-on-one session for myself as a lot of reflexive thoughts intervened the Ketso process. To overcome the above mentioned difficulties, I would recommend using Ketso with a supervisory team. In this way, a doctoral candidate might be guided through the Ketso session by the supervisor(s) and therefore will be able to better concentrate on context of the session. Overall, I would recommend

further scientific inquiry into the effectiveness of Ketso as a tool for a PhD planning.

A technical limitation occurred in the process of interviewing and the LSP workshops. In one instance, the audio recorder ran out of power and did not capture the last 15 minutes of one of the interviews. When transcribing the interview, I reconstructed the missing minutes of the conversation using my field notes. In the second instance, only an audio recording of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop was available as the video camera did not record the workshop for some unknown technical reason. The data from this LSP workshop were reconstructed with the help of the audio recording and the photos taken during the workshop.

Another limitation of this study in some cases was the language barrier. Through social interactions with participants I informed them about my personal background, for example, the languages I speak. During three interviews participants constantly switched from English to their mother language as they knew that I am fluent in that language. In one of the interviews, a WWOOFer used Spanish to describe complicated issues instead of English as it was easier for him. With two German participants, I conducted a lot of the interview in German. Participants who used Spanish and German during the interview confirmed that they felt more confident using expressions in their mother tongue. When I transcribed the interview data, I translated the interviews into English. Although my translation might not fully describe the participant's thoughts, I found that participants were able to explain themselves better in their own language and, thus, provide this research with deeper meanings and explanations of their subjective experiences as WWOOFers. Whilst there may be limitations in interpretation from switching between languages, I felt confident that I understood their meanings as I probed for clarity. By asking participants additional questions and checking if I understood them accurately I ensured that I gained clarity of the participants' point.

The last limitation arose when the participants mentioned personal and emotional issues. Some participants encountered emotional experiences during WWOOFing. When they described very personal emotional experiences or mentioned events which were beyond the scope of my research, I chose to act as a WWOOFer and friend, not as a researcher. This stance allowed me to hear the person out and to relate to their touching personal WWOOFing experiences. As a WWOOFer myself, I understand the difficult moments of this experience.

Wwoofers told stories about the difficulty of staying on an isolated farm in a remote region with no possibility of being able to talk to peers or to express their feelings and emotions in their own language. As a reflexive researcher who carries a dual role during research process I experienced messy 'entanglements' which are the "forces that influence, constrain, and shape our complex and dynamic act of producing and reproducing knowledge" (Ateljevic et al., 2005, p. 15).

One of the 'entanglements' I experienced is related to feeling sympathetic towards challenging experiences of some Wwoofers as I also encountered challenging situations as a Wwoofer. I also could identify with some issues mentioned by farmers in relation to hosting the volunteers, as I was aware of the potential issues and problems mentioned by researchers in the previous Wwoof studies. In some cases, I became emotionally involved with participants' experiences and my role of researcher was 'blurred' somewhere between acquaintance, friend and advocate (Pocock, 2015). As a reflexive researcher immersed in the field it was important to me to give "voice to others without losing sight of [myself]" (Cohen, 2013, p. 336). Although the importance of reflexivity in tourism studies is highlighted, the transparent emotional reflexivity is still rare within academic studies (Pocock, 2015). Hence, I believe that my 'entanglements' with participants mentioned here added value to understanding the subjective meanings and experiences of my research participants' (Pocock, 2015). Thus, give a deeper understanding of the social construction of the New Zealand Wwoofing experience.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The implication and importance of the relationships in the Wwoof programme make social constructionism the most appropriate paradigm to uncover the multiple realities and deep meanings of the socially constructed reality of participants. However, this statement does not mean that social constructionism is better than other existing paradigms, but, rather, that it is deemed as a more appropriate one for this particular research. Qualitative research underpinned by the social constructionist epistemology sees reality as a complex, multidimensional, and contextual phenomenon, qualities which relate to the nature of the Wwoofing experience. As outlined in this chapter, some alternative paradigms such as positivism see the researcher as a 'superior' person, who is in the best position to investigate and describe the phenomenon (Bryman, 2012). The social constructionism paradigm challenges this view and

focuses on cooperation between the researcher and research participants and so, in this research, opens up new meanings and perspectives to be explored around the WWOOF network. As such, the social constructionism approach allowed me to immerse myself in the research and to contribute my own experiences and co-create the reality with my research participants.

Multiple research methods including creative tools and a reflexive field journal contributed to the depth and the trustworthiness of the study. Metaphors captured in the creative LEGO models contributed to the understanding of the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience by capturing stories and experiences key to the participants. My reflexive journal allowed me to participate in the creation the WWOOF reality as a researcher and draw on one of the multiple faces of WWOOFing which I had experienced in the field. Data collection through the qualitative interviews and participant observation enabled me to acquire multiple realities of the phenomenon and get the scene beyond the physical events and settings on WWOOF farms. Previous studies grounded in social constructionist ontology in epistemology proven the effectiveness of the use of multiple methodological tools (Hunter, 2016; Iwashita, 2003; Young, 1999). Thus, the methods chosen for the data analysis were designed to complement each other. My analysis of the collected data progressed through a series of steps. First, I revisited all of the interview and LSP workshop transcripts, notes from the observations, and my reflexive journal entries. I identified the most outstanding quotes and observed the key themes emerging. I used the Ketso method to complement data analysis and distinguish three key themes.

The blend of methodological tools chosen for this research project allowed me to capture the deeper meanings of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience and allowed for the hidden meanings of its socially constructed nature to come to the surface.

Chapter Four: Results

This research sought inductive, rich, and context-dependent data to explore the subjective experiences of the participants of the WWOOF volunteer exchange programme. As an outcome of this research, an outside reader should get a deeper understanding of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience and how participants construe an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience. Throughout this chapter, I explain the distinctive features of each of the key themes identified through the analysis process described in Chapter Three. To get a better understanding and to give a voice to the participants, the themes are illustrated by quotes from farmers and WWOOFers. A discussion follows each theme. The study's findings are presented in two sections. First, the chapter provides an overview of the key themes that emerged from the data in relation to the research question. These are 'dirt', 'crossing thresholds' and 'ideals'. The main features of each of the three key themes are described and analysed in turn. Secondly, the chapter continues with the description of the results of the LSP workshop and describes an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience as it is constructed by farmers and WWOOFers with the help of LEGO bricks. Finally, the summary of this chapter follows.

4.1 Introducing the Participants

This section introduces the research participants so that the reader can get an idea of each individual's background and their level of experience in the WWOOFing programme. The level of participant's experience is counted in years of experience in WWOOFing and refers to the data collection timeframe, which was October 2013 to April 2014. This introduction makes a reader more familiar with the research context and ensures that the reader is better positioned to understand the interpretations of findings derived from the collected data. For qualitative researchers, maintaining participants' confidentiality, while presenting detailed accounts of participants' social life, presents unique challenges (Allen & Wiles, 2016). Such as, for this research it is important to consider the context of New Zealand. The country has relatively small population of 4.7 million people (Stats NZ, 2017) and although New Zealand hosts the second largest WWOOF network worldwide only 2399 farmers and an estimated 12949 volunteers participate in WWOOFing (K. Millener, personal communication, 2017). Researchers are constantly reminded of the importance of participants' confidentiality as an ethical requirement for the research (Coolican, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Roberts, 2015). Being ethical

involves, but is not limited to, using pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the participants (Thomas & Hodges, 2010). Table 4 summarises all the participants' details.

Table 4. Summary of Participants Details.

#	Name*	Gender	Country of Origin	Category	Participated in Interview/ LSP Workshop
1	Alice	Female	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview
2	Charlotte	Female	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview LSP Workshop
3	Linley	Female	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview LSP Workshop
4	Mike	Male	New Zealand	Farmer	LSP Workshop
5	Caleb	Male	New Zealand	Farmer	LSP Workshop
6	Chloe	Female	New Zealand	Farmer	LSP Workshop
7	Chris	Male	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview
8	Liz	Female	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview
9	George	Male	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview
10	Gregory	Male	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview
11	James	Male	New Zealand	Farmer	LSP Workshop
12	Mary	Female	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview LSP Workshop
13	John	Male	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview
14	Rachel	Female	UK	WWOOFer/ Farmer	Interview
15	Tessa	Female	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview
16	Vincent	Male	New Zealand	Farmer	Interview
17	Alex	Male	New Zealand	WWOOFer	Interview
18	Amber	Female	USA	WWOOFer	Interview
19	Angelika	Female	Germany	WWOOFer	Interview
20	Danny	Male	Mexico	WWOOFer	Interview LSP Workshop
21	Erik	Male	Sweden	WWOOFer	Interview
22	Eva	Female	Canada	WWOOFer	Interview
23	Jacques	Male	France	WWOOFer	Interview
24	Lauren	Female	USA	WWOOFer	LSP Workshop
25	Samantha	Female	USA	WWOOFer	LSP Workshop
26	Lea	Female	France	WWOOFer	Interview
27	Leo	Male	New Zealand	WWOOFer	Interview
28	Martin	Male	Germany	WWOOFer	Interview
29	Milena	Female	Slovenia	WWOOFer	Interview
30	Noa	Male	France	WWOOFer	Interview
31	Steffen	Male	Germany	WWOOFer	LSP Workshop
32	Xavier	Male	Spain	WWOOFer	Interview LSP Workshop

* Original names have been changed.

To protect my research participants' identities, I chose to use pseudonyms instead of abbreviations or numbers, in order to retain the human element of the participants. Due to issues connected to pseudonyms generation (Ogden, 2008), such as if a name chosen by participant herself it may redefine person's character or different participants may choose the same pseudonym name. Ogden (2008) calls for researchers' sensitivity as they should consider how participants might feel if they recognise themselves. I chose to assign fictitious names to the participants myself and not to let the participants choose their own pseudonyms, as the responsibility for participant anonymity lies firmly in researchers' hands (Creswell, 2013).

In total, 32 participants participated in this study. Some of them participated only in interviews; others participated in interviews and LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops. Overall 12 farmers and 13 WWOOFers were interviewed for this study. On the whole, the overall profile of farmers and WWOOFers is similar to previous WWOOF studies (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; Deville, 2011). Table 5 provides a summary of LSP workshop participants.

Table 5. Summary of LSP Workshops Participants' Details.

#	Name*	Gender	Country of Origin	Occupation
Workshop one				
1	Xavier	Male	Spain	WWOOFer
2	Steffen	Male	Germany	WWOOFer
3	Yana**	Female	Russia	WWOOFer
4	Mary	Female	New Zealand	Farmer
5	James	Male	New Zealand	Farmer
Workshop two				
1	Danny	Male	Mexico	WWOOFer
2	Yana**	Female	Russia	WWOOFer
3	Linley	Female	New Zealand	Farmer
4	Mike	Male	New Zealand	Farmer
5	Chloe	Female	New Zealand	Farmer
6	Caleb	Male	New Zealand	Farmer
Workshop three				
1	Samantha	Female	USA	WWOOFer
2	Lauren	Female	USA	WWOOFer
3	Yana**	Female	Russia	WWOOFer
4	Charlotte	Female	New Zealand	Farmer

* Original names have been changed.

** I participated in each workshop representing a WWOOFer. Additionally, I also facilitated the workshop at the same time.

In total, 12 participants were involved in the LSP workshops, five WWOOFers and seven farmers. In addition, during these three LSP workshops, I had a dual role as the facilitator and acted as a WWOOFer too.

Farmers

Alice comes from a big city. She has worked in a corporate environment for most of her life. Her partner Antony is a large-scale farmer and has an organic sheep farm in the Lower South Island. He has involved in WWOOFing for nine years. Alice became a co-host about five years ago when she moved into his house. Their farm is a very busy place, and WWOOFers are part of a large team which has paid employees too. Antony runs the sheep farm with the help of his employees and WWOOFers. Alice uses her management skills and helps with the administration of the farm. Alice's other responsibility is to take care of a big garden, which provides food for the family and WWOOFers. When Alice moved to the farm, she did not give up her career completely and so she has a freelance job, too. Alice participated only in an interview.

Charlotte used to have an orchard business in the Upper North Island. Her extensive orchard produced fruit and berries. Her neighbours and friends used to host WWOOFers for many years. At one time these neighbours got a request from an experienced WWOOFer, but at the time they could not accommodate him. They called Charlotte and asked if she needed help on her property. This experience was so good that she signed up for the WWOOF programme as a cultural exchange host in 2009. She sold the business and retired in 2013. In order to be closer to her family, she moved to a lifestyle block in the Central North Island region and continued to be a WWOOF host at her new home. At the time of my farm visit, she was developing her lifestyle block. The property features a garden, a few fruit trees and a recreational area with a pond. Charlotte enjoys talking and cooking with her WWOOFers. Charlotte participated both in an interview and a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop.

Linley is a full-time mum, and she runs a lifestyle block and leases grazing land as a farm business in the Lower North Island. The farm has organic certification. Her husband Mike has a full-time job in the next town. She first read about WWOOF through a farming magazine. She found out more about the network on the internet and joined as a host. Linley had been a host for about two years at the time of my farm visit in November 2013. Linley thinks that WWOOF is a win-win exchange: she gets some help on the farm, and WWOOFers have more

affordable and meaningful holidays. Linley likes to work with WWOOFers as she has someone to talk to and does not feel too lonely on the farm during the day. Linley participated both in an interview and a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop. When we first established contact, she thought positively about the LSP workshop as her children used to play with LEGO a lot. Linley thought that LSP was a fun opportunity to exchange ideas.

Mike is Linley's husband. He is a professional and works in town. He likes to spend weekends being involved in farm duties. His main job on the farm is to maintain the property and house. Mike participated only in a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop; he was very sceptical about this methodology.

Caleb is Linley's and Mike's youngest child. When I met him, he was finishing high school. Caleb was very enthusiastic about the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop as he has lots of experience with LEGO as a toy. He participated only in a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop.

Chloe is Linley's and Mike's daughter. She had just finished high school. When I met her, she was about to leave home and start her studies in a big city. Chloe participated only in a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop. She was very excited about the opportunity to play LEGO again.

Chris lives with his wife Liz and their children on a large lifestyle block in the Upper South Island. He works in the nearest town most of the time, but he also enjoys working on the property. Liz and Chris have hosted WWOOFers since the middle of the 1990s. The couple especially enjoyed having WWOOFers when their children were young. They particular enjoyed their being exposed to different cultures, languages, and food. Chris participated only in an interview; he was interviewed together with his wife, Liz.

Liz is the wife of Chris. She was familiar with WWOOFing from a young age because her parents used to have WWOOFers in the 1970s. She grew up having foreign people around, and she enjoys it a lot. When Liz and her husband Chris lived in town, they used to invite WWOOFers even though they had a tiny garden. In the middle of the 1990s, they bought their lifestyle property in the Upper South Island region. Since then they have hosted many hundreds of WWOOFers. They are very experienced hosts. Liz participated only in an interview; she was interviewed together with her husband, Chris.

George and his family moved to their property in the Upper South Island in 1984. George is a gardener by trade. He has developed the property into a lifestyle block with a big garden. They used to have farm animals. George knew people who managed New Zealand WWOOF network in the early days and he took out membership to get some help on his property. George knew about the hardships of travelling from his own travelling around the world. He likes the idea of WWOOFing where people exchange their labour for food and accommodation and have time to get to know locals. At the moment George lives with his new partner and offers commercial bed and breakfast accommodation. George no longer has no animals on his property, but he still has a big garden. He has also developed part of the property into a recreational park area for his guests. His WWOOFers usually help in the garden and with property maintenance. George participated only in an interview.

Gregory became a WWOOF co-host when he moved in with his partner 11 years ago. Gregory and his partner run a small bed and breakfast business offering commercial accommodation including a tent site, dorm beds, and apartments. Gregory and his partner have developed a nice garden and recreational area on the property. Gregory is a professional chef by trade and spends much of his time in the kitchen preparing meals for the paying guests and WWOOFers. A few times a year their property hosts large events, for example, New Year's celebration or weddings. Gregory participated only in an interview.

James is Mary's partner. He is a tradesman and his second business involves creative work. He has a workshop on his lifestyle block and often works from home. James tries to help Mary as much as he can with the farm; however, due to a health condition, he is unable to do some manual labour tasks. James participated only in a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop; he was excited and keen to play LEGO seriously.

Mary had joined WWOOF as a host when she needed manpower to help develop her lifestyle block in the Central North Island. Her husband James had a back injury, and he could not help with manual labour tasks. James is a tradesman with a full-time job. He runs his business from home. Over the years, WWOOFers have contributed to the development of Mary's property as she has imagined it could be. The property now has a garden area, an orchard, a cow shed, an area for ducks and chicken, and a resting area. Although the property has now been developed in line with her aspirations, Mary still hosts WWOOFers

because she enjoys cultural exchange and spending time with her WWOOFers. She enjoys listening to their stories and teaching them about farming and gardening too. Mary is busy with the farm and cannot travel much, which is why she enjoys 'travelling' through the stories of her WWOOFers. Mary has a part-time job, and she mainly works from home. Mary participated in both in an interview and a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop.

John has been a WWOOF host for three decades. He moved to his property in the Upper North Island in the 1980s. At that time, he knew nothing about WWOOFing. He became interested in organic farming and completed a few courses in biodynamic and permaculture³ principles. John first became a host on an impulse. He had met a stranded traveller in a town and invited him to his house. As a gesture of gratitude, the traveller did some work in John's garden. From that experience John discovered that through WWOOFing he could have a good social time with interesting people and get some help in the garden. John's partner Rachel was travelling around New Zealand, and she first came to his house as a WWOOFer. John participated only in an interview; he was interviewed together with Rachel.

Rachel is John's partner. About 10 years ago, Rachel and her travelling companion came to John's property as WWOOFers. After some time, John and Rachel developed a romantic interest in each other, which ended up as a stable, genuine relationship. Rachel says that she became a co-host overnight. She also became a step-mother to two children from John's first marriage, who live permanently with their father. Rachel participated only in an interview; she was interviewed together with John.

Tessa is a very experienced host and has over 20 years of WWOOFing experience. Tessa moved to remote lifestyle block in the Upper South Island when she had her first baby. Her property encompasses approximately 60 hectares of native New Zealand forest and a small garden area. She joined WWOOF to get some company, as her partner was working in a town about 70 km away. When they had their second child, her partner moved onto the farm to be close to the family. Two children from her partner's first marriage often visited them. Tessa says that WWOOFers helped her with the farm, but that

³ Permaculture stands for the permanent agriculture or permanent culture that intends to create human habitation and food production closer to natural design (Holmgren, 2002).

this was not her prime reason for becoming a host. She thinks that having WWOOFers is good for her children, since they live in a remote area. Often WWOOFers spent time with her children building rafts, tree houses or just going camping together. Tessa likes to be in the company of WWOOFers, and she enjoys their stories about their travels. Tessa participated only in an interview.

Vincent owns a vegetable farm in a remote region in the Lower South Island. He grows vegetables for the local farmers' market and supplies food box companies with his produce. He found out about WWOOFing from his ex-partner whose friends manage a German WWOOF organisation. He has been involved in WWOOFing for 14 years and had hosted around 2000 WWOOFers by the time of the interview. Vincent enjoys being a host and having nice people from all over the world. He enjoys the help of WWOOFers, but also likes to spend some social time with them. He has a very easy-going attitude to work on the farm and lets his WWOOFers work only four hours a day. Vincent thinks that in WWOOFing people should enjoy work and have a very good time while travelling and exploring new regions. Vincent participated only in an interview.

WWOOFers

Alex is an IT professional in his late 30s. Currently, he lives an 'alternative' lifestyle: he prefers to work for some periods in order to spend other periods of time travelling on his bicycle. He heard of WWOOFing while he was living in England in 2003. His first WWOOFing experience was in an eco-village in France. After that he was a WWOOFer in different countries around the world including his home country, New Zealand. Alex is vegan; he supports the green movement and is interested in various countries and languages. Alex participated only in an interview.

Amber loves the outdoors and works in outdoor education with young people. She enjoys garden work and getting her hands dirty. She is also interested in where her food comes from, and she likes to travel. The combination of these three interests brought her to New Zealand as a WWOOFer during a period of extended annual leave. Amber is keen to get new knowledge which she can implement in her daily job with young people. She has visited farms which offer an opportunity to gain different skills. Amber participated only in an interview.

Angelika is qualified as an office executive. She had been working in an office for a few years. As she felt tired and burned out, she decided to take time off

and to travel. However, she did not want to travel as a 'mass tourist'. She was looking for different options that offered alternative travelling experiences. Angelika chose WWOOFing as it provides an opportunity to gain insights into people's life in the country of travel through working and living with locals. Angelika wanted to learn particular skills and was looking for hosts who offer the chance to gain experience in beekeeping, cheese-making, and arts. Angelika participated only in an interview.

Danny has just finished a university degree and gotten married. Back home Danny had been impressed by the stories his flatmates told about their WWOOFing experiences in Australia. Danny was WWOOFing together with his wife. When I met them, they had been in New Zealand for about three months and had visited many farms. Danny enjoys doing physical work outdoors, learning about organic methods, and ways of growing and producing food. He also enjoys meeting locals and learning about local culture and the way of life. He thinks that one day he may become a WWOOF host himself. Apart from socialising with the WWOOF farmers, Danny and his partner enjoy 'togetherness' and feel that WWOOFing is a perfect way to have an unusual and long-lasting honeymoon. Danny participated both in an interview and a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop.

Erik is a young IT professional and an experienced WWOOFer. He became a WWOOFer by chance during his travels in Australia. He was short of money for travelling and someone in the hostel where he was staying told him about WWOOFing. His fellow travellers suggested he try a place in a remote region in Australia. His first WWOOFing experience changed his life and his priorities. In Australia, Erik became interested in sustainable living, food production, and biodynamic and permaculture principles. After returning home, he worked for a company in a big city, but after a while, he moved to the countryside to have a more sustainable way of life. Two years ago he inherited about 100-hectares of land and decided to develop the property into a business venture. He is particularly interested in growing a commercial forest, developing orchards, and creating a plant nursery. Erik had decided to go WWOOFing in New Zealand to get more practical knowledge and ideas of what he could do on his land. His choice of farms was very particular as he aimed to get more hands-on knowledge about and experience of growing trees. Erik participated only in an interview.

Eva describes herself as a globetrotter. After finishing a degree, she decided to have a gap year and go travelling. She first explored her home country and went WWOOFing for a couple of months on the West Coast of Canada. Eva is vegetarian and has an interest in food production and organics. She had strong environmental views and used to be an environmental activist while she was a student. When I met her, she had visited several farms in New Zealand. Eva is the only participant in this study who was not a member of the WWOOF New Zealand network. Eva found all her hosts through word of mouth while she was staying in hostels or travelling with other young adults. She participated only in an interview.

Jacques is a young professional. He has a degree in IT. He had a few years of stressful work in the office environment. He decided to take a break and use a gap year for travelling. He decided to do WWOOFing in New Zealand because he wanted to experience, and to learn, something different from his previous experiences. Coming from an urban European metropolis, he has no farming or agriculture experiences. He decided to go to New Zealand because of the summer season in the Southern Hemisphere and the chance to improve his English language skills. To find a WWOOFing position, Jacques created a short post on the forum advertising himself on the WWOOF New Zealand network website. He participated only in an interview.

Lauren is Samantha's mum. She is retired and enjoys travelling. When she heard from Samantha about WWOOFing, she decided to give it a try and accompany her daughter in WWOOFing. Lauren is married to an academic and she was very keen to experience the LSP methodology and to share her WWOOFing experience. Lauren participated only in a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop.

Samantha describes herself as a person who is very conscious about nutrition and the environment. After she had experienced a difficult moment in her life, she decided to take time off and go for a short holiday. She wanted her travels to be meaningful; that is why she decided to go WWOOFing to New Zealand. Samantha was very surprised when her mother decided to join her. Samantha participated only in a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop.

Lea is in the middle of major life changes. She has given up studying for her law degree and decided to change her career path. Back home she completed a course in organic farming. She is interested in learning to grow vegetables

commercially. She aspires to become a farmer who grows vegetables for farmers' markets. Lea heard that WWOOFing is popular in New Zealand. She decided to travel to New Zealand to get practical experience in organic farming and to explore the country. Lea participated only in an interview.

Leo is a Kiwi and comes from a big city on the North Island of New Zealand. After high school, he started a psychology degree at a university in the South Island. In 2011, he experienced an earthquake in Christchurch. He was impacted by that event and decided to take some time away from study. Leo's parents have friends who host WWOOFers on their farm. WWOOFing was his first 'living away from home' experience. In total, he spent 18 months on the farm. He got significant shepherd experience and became an assistant to the head shepherd. He enjoys sharing the accommodation with other WWOOFers. Leo has developed strong friendships with some WWOOFers and intends to visit some of them in their home countries. He participated only in an interview.

Martin has just finished high school in Germany. He wanted to get some overseas experience, improve his English, and meet locals before starting a university degree. He chose New Zealand because he had heard stories about travelling and working on New Zealand WWOOF farms from his cousin. As a teenager, Martin used to work at his grandparent's farm. He loves working in the garden and with animals. He enjoys learning new things and being outdoors. Martin had come to New Zealand for three months, but due to an unexpected family event, he had to return home earlier. I met him during his last WWOOFing placement in New Zealand. Martin participated only in an interview.

Milena found out about WWOOFing around two years ago from fellow students. From then on she dreamt of going WWOOFing. After completing her degree in environmental studies, she decided to combine her gap year with WWOOFing. She loves the concept of combining travelling, getting to know locals, and contributing to their lives through her efforts. Before coming to New Zealand, she was a WWOOFer in Poland. Milena has an interest in the environmental protection and ways of recycling in different countries. After her WWOOFing experience, she wants to write an article about recycling in New Zealand in the local newspaper in her home country. Milena participated only in an interview.

Noa is a young man with a management degree. He and his brother have a business idea to create a sheep farm fun park with different kinds of sheep. To be able to run this business, Noa was determined to get some experiences with

animals and some shepherding skills. He decided to travel and do WWOOFing in New Zealand or Canada to improve his English and get more hands-on experience. The first farm who agreed to teach him and accept him as a long-term WWOOFer was in New Zealand. When I met Noa, he had been living on the farm for about three months. Noa's host mentioned that, according to New Zealand educational standards, Noa's practical shepherd and grass management skills were at a New Zealand diploma level. Noa participated only in an interview.

Steffen is a young man who has just finished high school in Germany. He decided to take a gap year before starting a university degree. He decided to come to New Zealand as a backpacker. Once in New Zealand, he found out about WWOOFing and wanted to experience it as he was interested in interactions with locals. Steffen enjoys doing WWOOFing when he is tired from paid work and living in a hostel. He says that WWOOFing gives him a feeling of being at home. Steffen participated only in a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop.

Xavier is a young man in his late 20s. He has a degree in teaching and also completed a postgraduate course in agriculture. Prior to travelling to New Zealand, he was a WWOOFer in Europe. He came to New Zealand during the European winter holidays. He is interested in sustainability, and gardening and wants to gain some experience with farm animals while improving his English. Xavier participated both in an interview and a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop.

4.2 How the WWOOFing Experience is Socially Constructed

Analysis of the data revealed that the experiences of farmers and WWOOFers and their relationships are multifaceted. Three key themes emerged from the data analysis. The themes are not mutually exclusive and they overlap. The key themes are: 'dirt,' 'crossing the threshold,' and 'ideals.' These themes represent important aspects of the social construction of the meaningful experiences of the participants in this volunteer exchange programme. In the following sections, I describe each theme with an introductory conceptualisation and description of how it emerged from the data. Specific quotes and descriptions of the experiences as reported by the participants are provided. Each theme is followed by a theoretical discussion, drawing on the academic literature and with reference to previous discussions of the literature in Chapter Two in order to elaborate the significance and implications of the findings. The purpose of this section is to understand how the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is

socially constructed. The main themes that emerged from the analysis were based on the research objective of understanding how the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is socially constructed by capturing the in-depth subjective experiences of farmers and WWOOFers and their relationships with each other. The three outstanding and distinct themes described in the following sections are integral components of New Zealand WWOOFing experiences shared by the farmers and WWOOFers who participated in this research.

4.2.1 Dirt

The first emergent theme, 'dirt', is a central theme in the research as it sets the context of the social construction of the experiences of WWOOF farmers and volunteers in New Zealand. This theme also provides a starting point for deeper discussion of the research findings. As a symbol 'dirt' stands for unclean, unethical, not true and as a metaphor 'dirt' stands in opposition to the notion of purity (Lee, 2016). Douglas (2003) defines dirt as a 'matter out of place', which in symbolic form means that dirt appears in the wrong place, and thus interrupts a sense of order in the world (Cohen & Johnson, 2005, p. xi). In this research 'dirt' became an evident theme as participants repeatedly used 'dirt' in association with their description of the nature of the work, and, metaphorically, to describe unethical, exploitative treatment of the nature of their experience. Hence, the theme of 'dirt' is central to understanding the negative experiences in WWOOFing and to what events and situations participants refer as to 'dirty'.

Dirt is a twofold theme. Two discrete sub-themes emerged from the analysis. The first is 'getting the hands dirty'. The 'dirt' in this case is related to physical work, farming activities, and getting one's hands dirty through, for example, planting, weeding, harvesting, and taking care of animals. The work on the farm often requires hard work and involves 'getting your hands dirty'. The second sub-theme takes the form of a question: 'Is it a win-win exchange?' This sub-theme describes the 'dirt' within the relationships between farmers and WWOOFers, their experiences with each other, as well as their motivations and hidden agendas. Subsection 4.2.1.1 starts with an explanation of this theme by providing insightful quotations collected during this research in relation to dirt and physical work. The subsection continues by discussing whether or not the socially constructed WWOOFing experience represents a win-win exchange for WWOOF farmers and WWOOFers. The subsection finishes with a discussion

which connects the theme to the wider literature. Finally, the subsection provides a summary of the theme.

4.2.1.1 Getting the Hands Dirty

The first sub-theme – ‘getting the hands dirty’ – related to the core element of WWOOFing exchange, i.e., the farming activities. Farming activities in WWOOFing were associated with garden dirt, soil, farm maintenance, and animal care. The data collected during this research confirmed that many of the volunteers enjoy working outdoors and getting their hands dirty. The participants, on the whole, demonstrated their genuine interest in organics, gardening, and farming. For many WWOOFers, ‘getting the hands dirty’ is a core and integral part of the WWOOFing experience. The quotations that follow illustrate the participants’ interests in agriculture and farming.

To understand participants’ motivations to participate in WWOOFing, every interview started with the question “Why do you participate in the WWOOF programme?” Some of the participants commented on their affection for nature and gardening as integral components constructing their WWOOFing experience. Participants stated that they gain satisfaction from the activities connected to ‘dirt’, for example, as Eva remembers: “I really love to get my hands into the dirt. I love gardening. I grew up gardening with my mum. I learnt planting with her. For me, it feels good to be with the plants and the insects, it is really relaxing”. Amber also talked about her childhood and gardening:

I have always enjoyed working in gardens. We never had an extensive garden when I was growing up, but we usually had some plants growing. We used to grow some flowers, vegetables, and lettuce. I enjoy planting, and I enjoy getting dirty. (Amber, WWOOFer)

What is noticed in above quotes is the tactile nature of activity that facilitates tacit experiences and learning and evokes memories from them. Other participants revealed their love for nature and being outdoors. They mentioned that they find the WWOOFing programme attractive because participating in the WWOOFing experience allows them to get outdoors and to enjoy working with plants and animals in an attractive setting.

People are working together outdoors is what I love about WWOOFing. I like that because it reminds me of my tunnel house [built together with WWOOFers]. I also liked the fact that there is a whole lot of conversation going on while we are working. Working with WWOOFers makes time flow faster, and hard work feels easier. (Linley, Farmer)

Firstly, I love to work, in nature, with plants and animals. I have done this at my grandparents' place. They have a big property with a forest and a vegetable garden. Since my childhood, I often helped them out. For me, participating in WWOOFing is similar. And in this way, I have an opportunity to meet Kiwis and to experience real New Zealand. (Martin, WWOOFer)

As a WWOOFer I enjoy doing physical work outdoors. I love being outdoors, and I like learning about organic methods and ways of growing and producing food. It is great to see something coming out of dirty soil and becoming food (Danny, WWOOFer)

Unlike previous research on WWOOF (Deville & Wearing, 2013; McIntosh, 2009) that said that volunteers are not motivated by interest in organics, gardening, and farming, most of the participants in this research indicated their genuine interest in true WWOOFing activities. Moreover, WWOOFers were interested to learn more about organic farming and improve their skills. However, WWOOF farmers pointed out that despite the motivation to improve, the majority of WWOOFers come with a lack of practical skills. As one host, Tessa said:

A lot of people are not terribly experienced because they come from urban environments, and they do not know what they are doing. In the 80s more WWOOFers were truly interested in organics and passionate about gardening, but nowadays it is different, and WWOOFers often seek just free food and accommodation. I guess it is just a new generation. (Tessa, Farmer)

Tessa explained the lack of experience of WWOOFers as a part of the overall lifestyle changes of young people. On the other hand, another host, Mary, put the lack of experience down to the origin of volunteers, as many come from urban backgrounds.

Here you have differences when someone [who] comes from the office and never worked on a farm, or done manual labour. And this is a huge thing that you have to realise. On the farm, you have to show someone [how] to weed or how to use a shovel. Things that I knew when I was three. And you know, I have to tell so that they understand and it is not offensive. (Mary, Farmer)

Farmers assume that the level of practical gardening skills is low as many WWOOFers come to New Zealand from very densely populated areas in Europe where they were not exposed to gardening or farming. A small number of farmers stated that the lack of experience of WWOOFers often made them unhappy. Clearly, this situation often leads to conflict, as the farmers have a higher level of experience in farming and different expectations (McIntosh,

2009). Farmers reported that due to the lack of skills of WWOOFers and other challenging issues, for example, the language barrier, some WWOOFers damaged or broke the tools, which caused financial loss for the farmer.

And I gave them the opportunity to deal with skins (to get the hair off and meat off the skin), but they could not do it. They have damaged it. And I got them to do certain jobs on the drums, and I ended up with mistakes, which costs me time and money. And I stopped, it was too difficult. I wanted to get help and give them that experience. I wanted for them to see the process, to enjoy it but I could not have more losses. (John, Farmer)

And I suppose the most important thing to me as a WWOOF host is that WWOOFers respect that [rules], shut the gates, and do not let the cows in. Because within half an hour, they can do a year of damage. So that is my important thing, that it does not get damaged by the WWOOFers I suppose. (Mary, Farmer)

Vincent, who runs a large vegetable farm, mentioned that being a host is hard work: "I teach them on hand at the beginning of their day. Broken tools and babysitting is all hard work". As a very experienced host he, as well as other farmers with extensive hosting experience in WWOOFing, admitted noticing the change in WWOOFers' interests and motivations in recent years. Some experienced farmers said that WWOOFers visiting them between 1970s-1990s were truly interested in organics, gardening, farming, and alternative living compared to current WWOOFers coming to New Zealand. Talking about this issue, Rachel said:

Before, there were more people focused on permaculture and organic gardening and with those skills or learning skills. And over the last 20 years, it has kind of changed to people with just more general interest in how to do everything. And they are also interested in gardening, but less specific. They're more interested in WWOOFing as the mode of their travelling. And some of them are 'free accommodation type', and you can sort of tell those types. Nowadays, it is more general interest rather than a specific interest in organics. (Rachel, Farmer/WWOOFer)

As the previous quote from Rachel and earlier WWOOF research (Deville et al., 2016a; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) illustrated, the perceptions and motivations of WWOOFers have shifted and many travellers have been attracted to WWOOF as an affordable way to travel off the beaten track. Original WWOOFers were mainly people interested in and inspired by the organic movement; however, more and more WWOOFers nowadays do not have a specific interest in organic farming but are rather looking for an alternative way

of engage in non-commercial travel. However, despite this previous finding, most of the interviewed WWOOFers in this research reported a genuine interest in organic principles, farming, or gardening.

I think, for my experiences, people who are hosts are genuinely interested in organic farming and some people, WWOOFers, just see it as a 'free accommodation and food' sort of thing. I always try to explain [to] hosts my interests and plans. I understand that it is actually good if you have an interest in organics as a WWOOFer. And I know that the hosts appreciate it as well, it just makes it a lot easier if you are on the same page. This makes WWOOFing experience great for both parties (Erik, WWOOFer)

As one WWOOFer put it, WWOOFing is not just about affordable travel but also a learning experience which allows you to get closer to nature.

What is very important is that you do not see it as just 'free accommodation and food' for some work, in order to be able to see the surrounding[s] and to travel around. WWOOFing is also a way to learn more about the green way of life. I love learning different gardening; I love planting new vegetables. You dirty your hands, but you realise that you are a part of everything. I am interested in new gardening techniques, and I love learning about sustainability. Especially the New Zealand way of doing it. (Milena, WWOOFer)

The findings of the interviews in this research indicate that being involved in the activities connected to dirt and the possibility to 'get the hands dirty' are an integral component of New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Despite the lack of practical farming skills, many volunteers coming from urban areas are interested in working outdoors, connecting with nature, and learning new things as a part of their WWOOFing experience. Moreover, some of the WWOOFers mentioned interests and used the programme to gain practical and professional skills for their future business or employment. This finding is further discussed in the next subsection.

4.2.1.2 Is It a Win-Win Exchange?

Many WWOOF farmers and volunteers see WWOOFing as a win-win model. For example, George said that WWOOFing is "...a fair trade for accommodation and food." The WWOOF founder Sue Coppard remembers: "My goal when I first thought of WWOOF was to get myself into the countryside in a meaningful, affordable way with good company" (Pier, 2011). Soon after the first WWOOFers came to volunteer on farms in the UK, farmers realised the benefit from this exchange. While many of the participants in this study saw WWOOFing just as a simple exchange of labour for food and accommodation, others viewed

it as a meaningful way to travel which allowed them to have social interactions and gain new practical experience. As Linley put it, "Wwoofing seemed like the win-win kind of thing. So by joining the programme, I would get help, and they [Wwoofers] would have not just a cheap holiday, but probably [a] more meaningful holiday".

Commonly, farmers had pragmatic reasons for becoming a Wwoof host. They expected some benefit from participation in Wwoofing. For example, despite the fact that Mary enjoys hosting experience and tries to provide a meaningful experience for her Wwoofers, she admitted that the Wwoofing experience would not be valuable for her unless it was a win-win exchange.

I try to be accommodating to Wwoofers. I try to give them the experience that they are looking for and respect that it varies from Wwoofer to Wwoofer. But at the same time, it is not valuable to have a Wwoofer unless I get some return. I try to make sure that it is a mutual benefit for both of us, not just one side. (Mary, Farmer)

Not surprisingly, some Wwoofers saw the Wwoofing experience simply as an exchange of labour for food and accommodation. For example, Jacques, who had just wanted a change in his daily routine after quitting his job, thought that Wwoofing was a good way to travel.

I think that [the] Wwoofing relationship is a bit capitalistic. They are feeding me, they[re] hosting me, but I am paying them by working. But Wwoofing experience for me is also about the right atmosphere and making sure that the deal is there for everybody, and it is a win-win thing for everybody. (Jacques, Wwoofer)

However, other Wwoofers, who had a specific interest in organics, gardening or farming or were determined to gain particular skills through participating in Wwoofing, acknowledged that the relationships in Wwoofing have something more than just an exchange of labour for free food and accommodation.

For my time here, I saw different Wwoofers. Some of them, who only want to travel cheap use Wwoofing as a 'free food and accommodation' but people like me, who are interested in hosts, who are interested how to make honey or cheese have better Wwoofing experiences. Hosts understand it and prefer Wwoofers who are interested in activities. I think Wwoofing is an equally favourable arrangement; it is a win-win exchange. At least when you have the same interest in farming in mind. On the farm, you and your hosts get other things in return, not just food and accommodation for labour. (Angelika, Wwoofer)

Angelika also made a valid point that the WWOOFing relationship was not only about the labour exchange for food and accommodation, but it was something more. Previous research confirms that WWOOFers seek a more meaningful way of holidaying in that they like going off the beaten track and meeting locals (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). Earlier WWOOF studies found that farmers' motivations are predominantly social and pragmatic in nature (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; Taylor & Little, 1997). The current research confirmed these motives. When John discovered the WWOOF programme, he saw clear benefits for his lifestyle property: "I could see, it [WWOOF programme] was a twofold situation: first meeting people and the social thing with interesting people. And second, I got help in my garden". In the interview, Linley mentions that she enjoys passing skills on and knowledge to WWOOFers, but she also mentioned the social and financial aspects of the WWOOFing experience that are beneficial for her.

WWOOFing is also an aspect of my social life. Kids are almost out of the house, I am often alone here. Sometimes I feel isolated, and it is nice to have people around. And another one is just the physical help. That distresses me. There are many things I want to do, and I cannot do them all by myself. Our farm is very small, but we cannot afford to employ people. We especially need help in spring for planting and in autumn for harvesting and preparing for the winter. I cannot afford to employ a worker. And this [WWOOFing] is more interesting anyway. (Linley, Farmer)

One of the benefits of the win-win exchange was the social component of the WWOOFing experience. WWOOFers and farmers sought positive social interactions as a part of that experience. On the one hand, farmers wished to spend time with WWOOFers in order not to feel too lonely in their often remote farms. On the other hand, WWOOFers looked for engagement with locals and a chance to become part of the farmer's family and to enjoy social time with the hosts. Social interactions with interesting people are an integral component of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. However, both, farmers and WWOOFers mentioned the challenge of balancing the social interactions and work. In the following extract, Chris mentioned the 'dirty' side of the social component of the WWOOFing exchange. He admitted that hosting volunteers was also a challenging process.

When we have a WWOOFer coming, we try to explain our routine and how stuff on the property works, not that we have a strong routine, but we try. And often one challenge we had is the balance between the work and the social side of it. One problem we had is that we have a good social life, so when

one day we have not done much the next day it is hard to say that we need to start working in the morning. It is an interesting relationship, and that is why we explain things, and we do things together, and you do not have to say 'now it is time for you to go working'. It is easier. (Chris, Farmer)

Even though many participants considered WWOOFing a win-win programme, not everyone was happy with the experience. Thus, there was a need to ask the following question: "Is WWOOFing a win-win exchange?" This study indicated some evidence that WWOOFing exchange did not always provide the positive benefits sought and that often the parties took advantage of each other. The following quotations describe the 'dirty' side of the social construction of the WWOOFing experience. In other words, there were instances reported where the experience and relationships that were perceived as unethical, a misbalance of the win-win situation, and in some cases an exploitation of the relationship.

The dirty side of the WWOOFing experience can be illustrated by some examples given by WWOOF farmers. A few farmers reported situations where WWOOFers did not follow the rules related, for example, to the use of water or the internet. In some regions of New Zealand farms are not connected to the national electrical grid or water pipeline. In this way, farms are self-sufficient in terms of producing their own energy and collecting rain water. Thus, circumstances like drought or cloudy days can make some basic resources like water or electricity scarce. On such farms, hosts usually apply strict rules on the use of these resources. In this research, some farmers shared their experiences of WWOOFers' having over-consumed the resources despite explanations and warnings from the farmer's side. These negative experiences contributed to a misbalance in the WWOOFing relationship.

Despite the reported conflicts related to the consumption of the scarce resources, most of the hosts understood or excused the reasons for this misbalance. WWOOF hosts pointed out that people from urban areas do not understand what challenges are connected to self-sufficient living in a remote area. As Tessa explained: "...we are living in the area where you cannot just go and get milk or cooking oil when you run out of it. There is no dairy store around the corner. The next supermarket is over the hill 70km away". Talking about a similar issue, another farmer shared the following example:

I let people know that we have only 10 gigabytes of internet a month. So it is fine to check emails, but not downloading. But there was one chap who did not want to understand it. In

the end, all of us ended up without the internet for the rest of the month, and he was gone after three days. (Linley, Farmer)

Having discussed the examples of the misbalance that can occur in the WWOOFing experience from the point of view of hosts, I will now move on to discuss some examples of the uneven exchange mentioned by WWOOFers. For example, although the regulations around jobs to perform and hours to work state that WWOOFers should help for four to six hours on the land and in-house (WWOOF New Zealand, 2016), some farmers had a different agenda for their volunteers. One farmer in this research confirmed that the WWOOFers on her farm worked long hours, often the same hours as employees working on the farm.

We are very busy all the time, there is no end of jobs, we welcome WWOOFers as a part of the team to make a farm a better place, and we ask them to work the same hours as the rest of our team. Another thing, what we have not been talked at all, or two things: we talked a bit of working hours here, that it is pretty much full-time work. And that seems to work. There are some people too that it will not suit, and that is why I tell everybody before they come. (Alice, Farmer)

Alice is a co-owner of a certified organic farm which relies heavily on WWOOFers. This farm has several employees, but the workload is enormous, especially during the peak season. On this farm, WWOOFers joined the team of full-time employees and worked the same hours, even though they were volunteers and were not getting paid apart from receiving food and accommodation. During the fieldwork stage, I encountered another situation which related to an unbalance of the win-win exchange of the WWOOFing experience. At that farm, volunteers had to work more hours than initially agreed. The owner of the farm was hosting six WWOOFers at that time. One day, one WWOOFer got sick and could not work. To compensate for the loss of the manpower, the farmer asked the other five WWOOFers to cover for the WWOOFer who became ill and to work an extra hour.

During the fieldwork stage, I observed other situations where farmers took advantage of WWOOFers, for example, by asking them to perform a task they do not want to be involved in themselves. Some of the common 'unpleasant tasks' named by farmers included doing the dishes, cleaning the house, cleaning the animal sheds or weeding for long hours. For example, Mary mentioned that she often sought the help of WWOOFers especially when her garden needed weeding. She admitted that she did not want to weed and she was more excited to do other jobs on her property. Rachel mentioned that

sometimes WWOOFers were involved in things not relating to the farming like, for example, taking care of children in the house or helping with dirty dishes in the kitchen: "We love them to do the dishes", Rachel (Farmer/WWOOFer). In this connection, the more unpleasant side of the WWOOFing experience represented activities which WWOOFers did like not to be involved in. For example, Angelika said: "I expect not to be treated as a servant because I am volunteering".

Most of the WWOOFers who participated in this research clearly distinguished between being a volunteer and being a paid worker who, for example, travels under a working holiday scheme. WWOOFers said that if they were working in a hostel they would expect to help with cleaning and maintenance as a part of the job, but that when it came to WWOOFing, they had different expectations. In this research, WWOOFers mentioned that when they go WWOOFing, they expect to 'get their hands dirty' and to be involved mainly in activities related to organics, gardening, and farming. WWOOFers preferred to establish a connection with the farmer and to live with a farmer's family. They also highlighted that they sought meaningful travel experience by interacting and helping locals on their farms while learning new skills and improving their English. However, they did not expect to be taken advantage of.

A further aspect in this theme which emerged from the data is a purposeful use of WWOOFers, for example, using them for projects which farmers could not afford to employ a professional to do or when farmers lacked the skills, physical strength or health to execute a particular job. A few of the small-scale farmers who participated in this study admitted that they did not have enough money to employ professionals. Additionally, the remote geographical location of some farms explained the difficulty and high cost of hiring skilled workers for a small-scale job like weeding, tree felling or firewood chopping. In one instance, a farmer mentioned that he hosted a professional carpenter who built a wardrobe for him. Some other farmers in this study mentioned that they hosted WWOOFers when they needed help on the farm due to their age or physical condition. For example, Mary explained:

Originally I need[ed] manpower. James had a broken back, and he was working very hard in the business, and I just could not cope. I was trying to develop the section. I just could not cope. So I thought I can get help, especially young physical guys who can dig holes and do heavy work. So that is what it originally started from, but now that the property is actually

developed to a stage, I do not need them that much, but it is nice to have them. (Mary, Farmer)

Since farmers confirmed that they lack money but have other resources required to host volunteers (for example, food and accommodation), WWOOFing seems to be a very convenient way to employ people on a non-monetary basis. Another benefit for farmers is the ability to choose WWOOFers with a certain set of skills and also to determine the time frame of the volunteer's stay on the farm.

Leaving aside the previously mentioned cases, the majority of the farmers in this research seemed not to take advantage of a WWOOFer's labour and did not contribute to the exploitation of the WWOOFers. During the fieldwork phase, I met farmers and WWOOFers who made comments regarding ways to exploit WWOOFers. In most cases these reported stories were socially constructed by word-of-mouth rather than experienced personally. Some participants talked about the long working hours at some farms. Both farmers and WWOOFers had strong negative feeling towards these practices and considered it 'slave labour'. Tessa is a passionate organic farmer, and she acknowledges the benefit of the WWOOF scheme for organic farmers.

WWOOFing supports people who want to be organic because it is so labour intensive. You could not do organic farming without slaves. But it does annoy me when people use WWOOFers when they should employ people. (Tessa, Farmer)

However, she was aware of 'dirty' practices of WWOOFing in her region and the intensive working hours to which some volunteers commit. She continues to discuss some commercial organic farms in her neighbourhood.

And when I saw it, I thought Jesus Christ! I thought that the whole organic movement works on slaves! You cannot do it without the cheap labour. Organic farming is super labour intensive and how could you make organics survivable if you have to do it only by yourself?! But this guy had that family there, and those people work out there without a break. And I just thought it was disgusting. I thought it was exploitation. And there are so many organic places around here doing that, they all run on WWOOFers, and it is a slave practice! And when I see it, I think oh my God, organic farming cannot survive without slave labour. (Tessa, Farmer)

The above mentioned quotes raise the issue of whether the participants of this research experienced the unbalanced exploitative relationships in WWOOFing personally or rather construct this experience through word of mouth. During the fieldwork stage, I have not encountered any WWOOFer who was unhappy

about the working hours. The only imbalance between farmers and the WWOOFers reported or personally experienced in this research relate to the nature of tasks and the potential mismatch of the expectations between host and guest. Thus, it is not related to the exploitative nature of the WWOOFing experience. Only one farmer in this research acknowledged that due to the busy nature of the farm, WWOOFers are treated as part of the employees team and work the "same hours as rest of the team". Hence, the data collected from participants, my observations and reflexive thoughts allow to propose that participants of this research socially construct the potentially exploitative nature of WWOOFing experience through the word of mouth and repeat the stories of the potentially negative WWOOFing experience among themselves.

Despite potential imbalance and differences in the farmers' and WWOOFers' motivations, this research revealed that WWOOFing could be a win-win exchange for both parties. On the one hand, farmers in this relationship benefit from the extra help and social contact and the WWOOFers have a more meaningful form of travel by staying with locals and learning not only about organics, gardening, and farming, but also getting to know a Kiwi culture. The following comment by George illustrates the mutual benefits of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience socially constructed by farmers and WWOOFers.

I just wanted to say that I think the WWOOFing system is very beneficial for smallholders around the world. Especially for those, who are living on the land like us here and who[re] growing organic food. And also for those who have some small farming business, but who do not have very much money. So they can trade food and accommodation and have some labour. That is why WWOOFing was important for us in the beginning. We did not have very much money either. Now, it is less important. Our volunteers are helping our economy because we are a lot older now, it is important just to have helped to maintain our vast property. And also the social component, having great company is very nice. (George, Farmer)

Corresponding with previous WWOOF research findings (Cronauer, 2012; Deville, 2011; McIntosh, 2009), a common view amongst farmers was that the WWOOFing experience is an important aspect of the host's life. Some of the farmers, like John and Rachel, enjoyed having WWOOFers all year around. Rachel says: "We love people who emotionally, openly engage with us. We want to talk, to chat, to be open. We enjoy people who come forward to us and who share with us". In the same vein, farmers and WWOOFers admitted that one of the most enjoyable and important elements of the social construction of

Wwoofing experiences are the shared meals. Participants thought that dinner time especially provided time for a social exchange and discussions. Vincent mentioned that dinners at his farm were special for him because "We dine during the week at the house, and we talk there. At the weekend we often have fires at night and sit around and talk about everything what interests us".

On the other hand, the Wwoofing experience represents a win-win exchange for Wwoofers too. Wwoofers confirmed that, on the superficial level, they benefit from free accommodation and food. However, at the deeper level of the Wwoofing experience, they got a practical learning experience, a chance to experience the local and an alternative lifestyle and perhaps a more meaningful form of travel. Like many other Wwoofers, Danny appreciated the sound experience which he gets while travelling as a Wwoofer. He mentioned that for him, "...Wwoofing is a way to reach more experience while I am travelling and stay with local people. It is a way of varying my experience while I am on travel and an opportunity for learning. Another Wwoofer, Milena, compared the benefits of Wwoofing to those of a backpacker travel style:

I liked the idea of the different type of travelling opportunity. I like getting to know the country as [an]insider, as a local. In the past, I travelled quite a lot as a backpacker, and I got a bit bored with this kind of travelling. I mean not bored but I felt like an active tourist. And this time I wanted something more. So Wwoofing is a perfect way of getting to know the country in a different way and to meet the locals. (Milena, Wwoofer)

Many Wwoofers who participated in this research explained that the possibility of getting a glimpse of the lifestyle of New Zealanders was one of their primary reasons to go Wwoofing. In particular, Martin said that

It was important that I do not just travel to New Zealand but go Wwoofing before university. And this [refers to the farm] is an important part of my trip here. It is important because I wanted to see the life of Kiwis and not only the travel part of this trip, where you could experience the local life only from the outside. (Martin, Wwoofer)

The findings of this research reveal that the social construction of Wwoofing experiences incorporates not only 'dirt' in relation to knowledge about farming activities and getting one's hands dirty, but also incorporates the dirty side of the at-times unbalanced exchange. As such, the Wwoofing experience appears to be an imbalance when participants have hidden agendas. In spite of the positive cases mentioned previously, certain examples provided in this

subsection prove that, if the expectations and motivations of farmers and WWOOFers are mismatched, WWOOFing could turn into a 'dirty' or unethical exchange model. As a result, it is impossible to reach a balance of a win-win exchange when one party takes advantage of another party. George was concerned about both, farmers, and WWOOFers, and when he asked, and then tried to answer, a somewhat rhetoric question:

How do we change WWOOFing to be more of that [original] philosophy? As for me, I do not know. Maybe it is a question for the organisation because everybody is so individual. I would like to see less [sic] commercial farms and organisations using WWOOFers as cheap labour. (George, Farmer)

4.2.1.3 Summary

This subsection of the thesis discussed the first theme of 'dirt' which emerged from the inductive analysis presented earlier in this thesis. The research revealed that 'dirt' is an integral part of a socially constructed WWOOFing experience. A term 'dirt' stands for description of soil as a substance and it is used to metaphorically describe something unclean, unethical or not true. In this research the theme 'dirt' is twofold. It has appeared through participants' description of the nature of the physical work on the farm as well as metaphor to describe unethical or exploitative WWOOFing experience. First, the participants in this research enjoy being involved in gardening and farming activities which allow the participants 'to make hands dirty'; it is the nature of getting experience of physical labour on the farm. On the other hand, the symbolic meaning of 'dirt' as a part of the WWOOFing experience was discussed whereby the nature of the experience can become imbalanced or unethical or turn to be exploited relationship. Examples of the mismatched motivations and hidden agendas of the participants were provided. The situations illustrating a win-win exchange for WWOOFing participants were presented. The lived experiences on the farms observed during this research were positive; yet there were negative comments and perceptions made of WWOOFing experiences generally 'at other farms'. Consequently, if the expectations and motivations of farmers and WWOOFers match, WWOOFing can be a win-win exchange for both parties. However, based on the information collected for this thesis I argue that if one party forces its agenda, the balance within the relationships between farmers and WWOOFers becomes fragile.

4.2.2 Crossing Thresholds

The theme of crossing thresholds emerged from the data when participants described and reflected on their WWOOFing experiences either as a host farmer or as a WWOOFer. Each threshold arose within its own specific context, as detailed in the next section, but viewed together across the data, this theme of crossing thresholds underpins the core events of the WWOOFing experience. A threshold has many definitions generally describing a process of transformative character that might be challenging (Johnson, 2015). Threshold is a change in identify which is linked to an ontological change (Baillie, Bowden, & Meyer, 2013). In the early 2000s Mayer and colleagues have identified and developed a threshold concept framework in education:

A threshold concept can be considered as akin to a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something ... a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress. ... There may thus be a transformed internal view of subject matter, subject landscape, or even worldview. This transformation may be sudden or it may be protracted ... with the transition to understanding proving troublesome. Such a transformed view or landscape may represent how people 'think' in a particular discipline (thinking like an engineer, or like an economist, for example), or how they perceive, apprehend, or experience particular phenomena (Meyer & Land, 2003, p. 1).

This definition of the threshold concept accentuates the importance of understanding the transformative processes that are part of WWOOFing experience. In this research, in particular, farmers and WWOOFers described three thresholds related to the WWOOFing experience such as 1) a threshold as the thing you step across when you enter a new room or the threshold of the encounter, 2) a threshold as a point of departure or transition to something new or personal growth, and 3) a threshold as a limit or boundary or significant changes in life.

The analysis of the data collected during this research gave a sense that participants involved in the WWOOF programme crossed various thresholds as a part of their WWOOFing experience. In this research the concepts of thresholds or of crossing thresholds situated within this theme are seen as a way for participants to encounter different cultures, to grow personally, to discover new things, and to have experiences that lead to significant changes in the life of the participants. In this research, the notion of crossing the threshold is based on the participants' experiences in the WWOOF programme.

The thresholds in WWOOFing discussed in the following subsections encompass the activities that: improve communication skills through the encounter with different people, languages, and cultures; develop a person's talents and potential; and, contribute to the realisation of dreams and aspirations. This subsection begins with the examples of crossing a threshold as a part of the encounter. Exploration of this sub-theme continues by providing examples taken from the lives of the participants which relate to their personal growth and significant changes in the participants' lives as a part of their WWOOFing experience. Finally, this subsection provides a wider discussion of the literature in relation to crossing the thresholds as a part of the WWOOFing experience, followed by the theme's summary.

4.2.2.1 Encounter

The idea of crossing a threshold in order to encounter something new described in this subsection forms one of the core elements of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Across the interviews, the encounter between farmers and WWOOFers was seen as the best way of fulfilling the social aspirations of the participants. Farmers participating in the WWOOFing exchange seek social interactions with travellers and WWOOFers look for a different type of travel which allow them to explore a different culture in a natural setting. In New Zealand, the majority of WWOOFers are young people in their twenties or early thirties (WWOOF New Zealand, 2016). This demographic could partly be explained by the Immigration New Zealand laws and limitations in relation to the working holiday visa scheme and volunteering (Immigration New Zealand, 2016b).

Many WWOOFers who come to New Zealand are young people who have just finished high school or university and decided to take a gap year. The majority of the WWOOFers who participated in this research had similar reasons for going WWOOFing in New Zealand as Martin who said:

I have just finished [the] high school, and I wanted to travel before I start a degree in university. I heard about travelling in New Zealand from my cousin. New Zealand is an amazing country. It is a dream adventure travel: it has everything on one spot: beaches, dunes, tropical forest, mountains. Everything you can wish for. But I did not want to travel as a backpacker; I wanted to see [an]other New Zealand, to see locals and their culture (Martin, WWOOFer)

Martin's comment summed up three distinct reasons for participating in the WWOOF programme which similarly emerged from the interviews with other

WWOOFers. First, was the interest in organics, gardening, and farming. Second, WWOOFers like to travel to New Zealand because of its pristine environment and unique nature. Third, participants chose the WWOOF programme as their primary way to experience New Zealand as they wanted to engage in an intercultural experience with locals and improve their language skills. Some of the participants decided to go WWOOFing when they had an extended holiday period, as in the case of Xavier:

As a teacher, I have long school holidays now. I do WWOOFing because of spare time during which I want to travel a little and to improve my English. For this, I think I need to stay with local people. I was thinking to do WWOOFing here because I have done it before, in Europe. And I liked it a lot. By doing WWOOFing, I can speak English and get to know people from their cultures and to know the different land. The land which is different from mine and which is very far. (Xavier, WWOOFer)

Other WWOOFers mentioned that the best way to know people is to live with them. Thus, intercultural encounters are important to the participants travel experience. For Angelika, the possibility of living with locals was amongst the main reasons for choosing the WWOOF scheme in comparison with other available options for travel, for example, packaged backpacker tours or a classic working holiday scheme.

I enjoy getting to know New Zealanders. In WWOOFing, living with a host provides a good way to learn [an]other culture and [a] very good way to travel because you are in somebody's house, and you see how they live and see the real Kiwis. (Angelika, WWOOFer)

Obviously, WWOOFers staying with locals was an important part of the WWOOFing experience. Staying with locals contributed to their understanding of New Zealand's culture, customs, and traditions. Although, as individual travellers, most of the WWOOFers stated that they were comfortable being alone, they did seek out interactions with locals and other travellers. In some cases, WWOOFers sought more than just interaction with locals. As shown in her story, Milena was looking for a meaningful holiday and a way to become part of the host's life.

Well, the experience I had already, was like one family really adopted me and let me in. It was a really nice experience. It was on the previous farm. And it happened really fast. We just clicked somehow. I was really, ahh..., that was/is something I was searching for. I like slowly to become a member of a family in some way, if possible. It cannot always happen. I

understand because not all the people are compatible. It happened to me a previous time, and it was really nice feeling. And I can understand if you are just visiting a farm for a week, sometimes you just need more time for that, but over there it happened in two days. And we were already functioning as a family. It is really, really nice. Otherwise, I like learning new stuff about farming. As I said, I know a lot of theory, but each person has its [sic] own techniques of doing stuff. Also, learn new knowledge about sustainability and organics, it is really nice. Also, I meet the locals; they can tell you more about the country, or maybe they can show you places; they could take you to some places. Until now I did not have these experiences, they did not have time for me in this way, and I can understand that farmers are always busy. But that is maybe something I am looking forward to in the future. (Milena, WWOOFer)

In the interview, Milena also described that when she felt like a member of the farmers' family, she felt at home. By choosing a different way of travelling, she sought to experience local life, customs, and tradition. For her, feeling at home made her New Zealand WWOOFing experience special and unforgettable. The interviews with other WWOOFers revealed that encounter of being welcomed in a family holds a special place in their WWOOFing experience. While travelling, many WWOOFers mentioned that they not only enjoyed the company of locals but were also keen on meeting fellow travellers. Erik said "... while WWOOFing I really enjoy different encounters with people. I love to see their places. ...so far it has been very good. I met some interesting people not only among farmers and I saw a lot of good intentions". Other participants were keen to develop intercultural relationships and meet other WWOOFers "because I think they are interesting people. I want to hear their opinions, get their energy and initiative. I think that if they do not mind travelling, they are open-minded people", Jacques (WWOOFer).

Additionally, WWOOFers appreciated the possibility of meeting and getting to know people from different countries, as New Zealand is very popular among international travellers.

It is most important to meet a lot of different people from different countries. Here, I met English, German, Russian and others. We are friends, and we have no problems, and that is amazing. I think it is the most amazing thing now. I like to meet people and discuss things. When you work hard, you return to the house and discuss, and you are tired, and later you sleep good. (Noa, WWOOFer)

Many farmers in New Zealand live in remote locations and lack social contact. Some of the farmers who participated in this study reported that social benefits

from contact with international travellers were among the main reasons for their becoming a WWOOF host. For example, Vincent, a farmer from the Lower North Island region, spoke of the social benefits of having WWOOFers on his remote farm.

We are quite isolated in here. We are far from all towns. And we are a bit different to the rest of community who live here because we are an organic farm. Not everyone shares our philosophy of farming. And for us, WWOOFing is a nice way to have nice people around. (Vincent, Farmer)

Other farmers living in remote locations had similar views. For example, Tessa decided to join WWOOF when she became a mother and was living on a remote lifestyle block while her partner was working in the nearest town. Her first WWOOFers helped her out not only in the garden but also with her baby. Tessa also mentioned that when she started hosting WWOOFers, they contributed to her emotional wellbeing, as she often felt very lonely being alone on her property. Clearly, WWOOFing is an important component in the host's social life.

Participation in the WWOOFing exchange contributes to the diversity of social life on the farm. In this research, many farmers mentioned that through WWOOFing 'the world comes to my house'. Having the company of international people and hearing their stories were among the primary reasons for hosts' joining the WWOOF programme. For example, the following quote from Linley describes the importance of WWOOFing in her daily life: "WWOOFing is also an integral aspect of my social life. Otherwise, I will be here on my own, alone. But I enjoy the company and it is nice to have people here sometimes (Linley, Farmer).

Another similarity between farmers and WWOOFers became evident in this research. Some of the farmers shared similar past experiences with their WWOOFers in terms of travelling. Some farmers had travelled around the world when they were younger. Like their WWOOFers, they were eager to know different cultures and make new friends. It was noticeable that farmers who had international travel experience had a special interest in social interactions with WWOOFers. One example illustrating this fact was provided by Rachel.

WWOOFers are important for me. I meet lovely young people. A somebody to whom I may become connected. And this experience gives me friendship and emotional connection. And because I was a traveller myself and then I became static, in those terms, WWOOFers keep me in the travelling vibe, and it

keeps my life fresh. So that is [a] very important [part] of what WWOOFers bring to us. They bring freshness, like a colour, or like a rainbow to people's life if they have settled down. And that is what you say, isn't it John? Like you always say, John that the world comes to you. (Rachel, Farmer/WWOOFer)

In my role as a WWOOFer I was involved in a few social conversations with farmers or heard other WWOOFers talking to farmers about their previous travels and locations they had both visited. Farmers were sharing their stories about their travel experiences, and WWOOFers were contributing to those stories with their impressions. As a WWOOFer myself, I found that it was an amazing feeling to talk about travelling to the same place with someone who had visited this place many years ago. One of the farmers, George, shared with me his experience as a backpacker traveller in Europe and Israel in the 1970s. He found many similarities between staying in a kibbutz and participating in the WWOOF programme.

In those days WWOOF was [a] very small organisation. And the reason why was that we really believed in the philosophy of providing accommodation and food in a community spirit or family spirit for people who were travelling and who wanted not just [to] keep on travelling but wanted to stop and spend time with locals. Because actually, both of us had travelled around the world in our youth. In those days, in the early 70s, there were only youth hostels, and they were very few and far between. Often it was difficult to travel around the world like a backpacker and sort of do it cheap. I did find people to stay with. I could stay with someone and help in their gardens because I was a gardener. So what I did was kind of like WWOOFing. And I also spent time in a kibbutz in Israel. Actually, working on a kibbutz is like WWOOFing, really. Naturally, when time came for us to have some land, we joined WWOOF. So it was a natural thing. We could get some lovely people from other cultures to help us, and we could enjoy conversations with them. (George, Farmer)

In contrast, some of the farm hosts who participated in this research had never been out of New Zealand. Those farmers admitted that they particularly enjoyed listening to the stories of their WWOOFers. John, who really loved listening to the travelling stories of his WWOOFers said: "I am not a traveller, I am not interested in travelling, this is my travelling". Every day he prepared dinner, and during dinner he enjoyed listening to the stories which WWOOFers shared with him. These social interactions help to construct the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. These interactions formed an important part of the host's social life as many farmers are limited by the geographical location of New Zealand, time, and money. Some small-scale farmers like Mary stated that

is it difficult to go on holiday if you run a farm business and need to take care of animals.

I feel a little bit tight here because it is very hard for me to go on holiday. WWOOFing is a really neat way to meet interesting, different people and a way to share their culture. Because I cannot travel to Russia to find out how is it there, so I bring Russia to me. And so people come, and they try to make their food for us or tell stories. It is really amazing because I[\'ve] got a small world here. (Mary, Farmer)

A few farmers pointed that they enjoy the energy of young people. Having young travellers around and listening to their travel stories makes some of the hosts feel energised and motivated. Linley said, "I enjoy the energy and creativity that people bring with them. I do not know if I really mentioned it, but one of the things is [that WWOOFers] help us achieving some of the goals on the property". Other farmers like Alice mentioned the importance of the presence of young people on their farm for reaching their goals.

So it brings the world to our home, which is wonderful. And a lot of energy especially, because most of the WWOOFers are 20 years younger than we are. That is a really fantastic injection of energy and enthusiasm. Light-hearted, not always but often, light-hearted people who help you to carry on and help you through the year. That is really good. (Alice, Farmer)

Friendship stood out as another important element of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. A small number of farmers mentioned that they became friends with some of her WWOOFers. They said that they had made international friends whom they could not have met elsewhere. Chris said, "We enjoy the fact that we had some beautiful creations from this people. We benefit from it. We make friends with some, and follow who got married and who got babies and stuff". John was very happy to tell me about WWOOFers who had visited his farm more than two decades previously and had come back to visit him.

Last year we had a family who turned up from the States. Jim and Kate have WWOOFed at our place 22 years ago as a young couple travelling on their big journey. They turned up on my doorstep again, and they brought a 13-year-old and 6-year-old daughters with them. And I have my sons here. It is amazing, we are at two different places, and we are still connected. They were surprised that I had remembered them, and I always remember the good ones. They remember me, and they wanted to come back. And when they left, this time, they said that this was their favourite experience in the whole [of] New Zealand. (John, Farmer)

Although it has been argued that WWOOFing lacks in reciprocity compared to other non-profit exchange programmes, for example, Couchsurfing (Chen, 2012; Geiger & Germelmann, 2015; Jesudhass, 2011), there was evidence of people visiting each other after the WWOOF exchange. Two farmers mentioned that they have visited their WWOOFers in their home countries. For example, Chris said: "When we went to Europe, and in France and Switzerland we went to stay with WWOOFers". Two WWOOFers who participated in this research shared that they had revisited their hosts or met with fellow WWOOFing travellers upon their return home.

These examples show how in some cases from the initial encounter in WWOOFing the relationships between farmer and WWOOFers developed into a friendship. However, farmers are realistic and understand that it is hard to keep relationships and friendships alive over time and distance.

To me, the nicest relationships in WWOOFing are the ones who keep in contact and even often send an email at Christmas time and it is really nice when we get postcards and letters or an email back saying "Hey, I am now in Greece, having a lovely time, I saw a pic, and it reminded me of you and hope all is good" or something like that. So to me, it's the feeling that you have not just been used, that you have made an impact on a person, and you are a little bit of a friend, which, of course, is not always true. (Mary, Farmer)

As did the farmers, WWOOFers mentioned that they created friendships with farmers and fellow WWOOFers. Xavier lives in Spain on the French border. He often visits his first WWOOF hosts: "We visit each other because we are good friends and live not far away from each other". As a WWOOFer myself I keep contact with a few farmers, and I visited some of them as a friend after my data collection. One farmer invited my husband and me to visit her during a quiet winter season when she does not host many WWOOFers. My husband and I spent a nice weekend in the countryside. I believe that some friendships in WWOOFing have a chance to become sustainable when the farmer and the WWOOFer share a special memory, an experience, or interest. For example, Leo, a WWOOFer from New Zealand, went travelling overseas and visited other WWOOFers with whom he had become friends. Similarly, Jacques was interested not only in the encounter with New Zealanders but also with other WWOOFers.

And yeah, I am keen to meet new people and make new friends. Because I am from [a] totally different background like an upper class in the biggest city in France, I am really

not related at all to farmers and anything like that. So that is interesting, and at the same time, I would like to meet other WWOOFers because I think they are interesting people. They travel, they have an experience like me, and they are open-minded to share it. (Jacques, WWOOFer)

This section has discussed how the participants cross the threshold of the encounter to something new. Getting to know different cultures and even making friends seemed to be important aspects of the social construction of WWOOFing experience. The next section will look at the personal growth as the threshold in WWOOFing.

4.2.2.2 Personal Growth

While some of the participants crossed a threshold in order to encounter each other and that of other culture(s), some of them also crossed a threshold of personal growth. Some participants saw the WWOOFing experience as a starting point for personal growth. The interviews with farmers and WWOOFers revealed that the WWOOF programme provides an opportunity to grow personally on many levels. First, many of the participants had a chance to grow on an educational level and to widen their horizons. Second, WWOOF provided the opportunity to grow on an emotional level. This inductively acquired 'personal growth aspect' of the WWOOFing experience was critical to understanding the social construction of the WWOOFing experience. The sub-theme of personal growth, thus, demonstrates how the participants made sense of their experience as farmers or WWOOFers and turned these experiences to their benefit.

On the educational level, the WWOOF programme provides an opportunity for WWOOFers to improve their language skills as well as their knowledge about organics, farming, and agriculture. The teaching-learning component appears to be a critical part of the socially constructed New Zealand WWOOFing experience. The following story from Xavier illustrates the desire of most of the WWOOFers to improve their language skills, learn new things and get practical experience in organic farming.

Now I live in the village, and I have a garden. I think with WWOOFing you learn a lot of things about the land and how you can produce your meal. For me, it is very important. I think that at this moment in Europe we do a little to that. But people must know the importance of home made things and food produced by yourself. Here, in New Zealand, I want to learn different techniques in gardening. When I go home I will do it there. I see how WWOOFing experience is important in my life for this and for learning English. (Xavier, WWOOFer)

Some of the WWOOFers chose their farms in line with their interest. For example, I met WWOOFers who were interested in beekeeping, cheese-making, herbal medicine, carving, organic gardening, and permaculture. WWOOFers stated that they wanted to try a new skill, acquire a new hobby, or even learn a new profession. One of the participants went to a large scale sheep farm, and he became interested in shepherding. During his stay on that property, he had acquired practical shepherding skills and grass management knowledge.

I have not done any courses, but I picked it up from doing WWOOFing and paying no money. It's been a good way of learning and not having to worry where you sleep and not really having to plan too much. And you get jobs on a daily basis, and you can leave whenever you want. It encouraged me to go travel, plus all people I have met through WWOOFing. I plan to catch up with most of them when I go over. I hope to see them again. (Leo, WWOOFer)

The farm where Leo was staying had provided him with on-farm training. Leo's host estimated that he had acquired knowledge equivalent to a Certificate in Farming Practices of New Zealand at level three standard. Although only a few WWOOFers get such professional skills through their WWOOF experience, for most volunteers, the WWOOF programme provided an invaluable learning experience. This idea was clearly revealed in the conversation with Danny:

Yana: What importance does WWOOF play in your life?

Danny: For now, WWOOFing is a way for reaching more experience while I am travelling and stay with local people. It is a way of varying my experience while I am on travel and an opportunity for learning. I can also improve my language skills. As a WWOOFer I enjoy doing physical work outdoors, being outdoors and I like learning about organic methods and ways of growing and producing food.

Yana: How do you think you will apply the knowledge you acquire through WWOOFing in your future life?

Danny: I would like to have my own farm in the future. I would like to grow my own food. Maybe to have chickens or a cow. I do not know yet. All of these experiences are so useful. I may even become a host for WWOOFers. Because I also enjoy meeting the people who farm and getting to know them. So for me, that is WWOOFing and finding of their culture, ideas, points of view and things like that. I think I would be a good host. I learn so much here.

Clearly, there is an educational component in crossing the threshold i.e. the beginning of personal growth in WWOOFing. WWOOFing provides the possibility not only to learn but also to teach. Many farmers disclosed that one of the

important aspects of WWOOFing experiences for them is being able to teach people new skills and to see their personalities grow while they are mastering new skills.

All those documentaries and organic growing courses set me on a whole new path of focus, and because it was so international, it taught me the whole global 'where we were at', it is about sharing all information I have. I saw it right from the beginning as not just me taking on WWOOFers and using them as farm labour but to educate them and share my or our journey as who I am. (John, Farmer)

Like John, Linley enjoyed the pedagogical side of the WWOOFing experience; she said: "I enjoy passing skills and knowledge that would help people to be more self-sufficient and more sustainable in their own lives. They can learn new skills here, adapt them to their home environments and apply those skills". Although it was more typical for farmers to teach WWOOFers, two farmers reported cases about WWOOFers who had taught them new skills. For example, Chris and Liz recalled the following story:

Chris: Remember this couple who helped us with a garden?

Liz: Yeah, there was one couple who helped us to establish the garden when we just settled at this property. Before coming here, they had done a permaculture course. She drew us a plan of how we should plant things.

Chris: And explained to us some of the basic concepts. It was as if we had employed a gardener or a landscape architect.

Liz: That was one of the rare occasions when WWOOFers would come with knowledge and share it with the hosts. I think it happens a lot, but we did not experience it often. Normally, WWOOFers come to learn from the host, but some of them have suggestions and ideas. A lot of WWOOFers have done training for sustainability, or they grew up on [an] organic farm themselves.

In my experience as a WWOOFer, I had a similar learning experience. At my first farm, I had acquired a useful skill and was able to pass it on to my host on my second WWOOF farm, although, at the time I had never thought that I would ever use this knowledge and skill again. The extract from my reflexive journal describes this experience:

It was a rainy day, and we could not do much outside. Xavier suggested working on beehives. He'd previously got lots of experience with bees as he stayed on a beekeeping farm. This day he taught me how to install a wax sheet into a beehive

frame. This was an interesting experience and not a difficult process. Ahh, this nice bee wax smell. I just love it.

I was wrong to think that I will never apply this knowledge again. Already on my next farm placement, I heard the farmer saying that she wants to go to town to bring the bee wax frames to a beekeeper. She wanted him to install the wax sheets for her new beehive frames. I could not believe my ears. I suggested that I could teach her how to do it. First, my host was a bit sceptical as I did not have much WWOOFing experience by then, but she agreed. We spent the whole day in a vibrant teaching-learning process and succeeded to put all the wax sheets into the frames. We just did it with the help of the car battery and a few wires.

At the end of the day, my host was very happy that the job was done without leaving the farm and also that she learned how to do it by herself. In turn, I was very delighted. I felt, fulfilled, I felt proud and pleased that I was able to teach an experienced farmer some skill. That was an excellent feeling. (Reflexive Journal).

In addition, I met a WWOOFer who shared an experience similar to mine with me. Leo had been on one farm for an extended period of time. He admitted that in the beginning, he enjoyed learning new skills from the farmer. A few weeks later, when he got more experienced as a shepherd, he was already passing that knowledge to other WWOOFers. This experience was very rewarding for Leo.

When I first came, they show me everything, and now I show the WWOOFers different things around the farm, and I really enjoy showing them, I enjoy passing on the things that I have learned and help[ing] other people. Well, I kind of could imagine how they feel like as I have the same experience back. That is really cool, being able to pass it and just working. (Leo, WWOOFer)

Clearly, the teaching-learning threshold forms one critical component of personal growth as a part of the WWOOFing experience. On the emotional level, farmers felt content when they passed on valuable skills to their WWOOFers. Charlotte said:

Having a background as a botanist, I enjoy educating my WWOOFers about the plants. I hope that they learn something useful and that when they return home they may grow a parsley plant in a small pot in their kitchen. I see the educational moment of WWOOFing as important; it gives me a special feeling. (Charlotte, Farmer)

Another form of personal growth mentioned by farmers was mastering management skills. Across the interviews, farmers mentioned that coordinating

volunteers was a difficult task. They also acknowledged the challenges connected to unreliable WWOOFers who arranged a farm placement but did not come. In the following quotation, Linley shares her experience in managing the volunteers.

It is the first time with four people at once. I am not much of a manager. Mike does not mind to tell people what to do and working around and monitoring them. But I find three people is as much as I can handle. Otherwise, I am stuck. And also more than that, it can become a job for me to provide everyone with the occupation. (Linley, Farmer)

Rachel became involved in WWOOFing as a volunteer, but after a change in her circumstances, she became a co-host. She compared her experiences as a host and as a volunteer and saw a lot of benefits in being a host.

Further points that could come from being a WWOOF host are: managing a team of people, having to make those boundaries, the courage necessary to say "Could you please do it like this, not like this," and ask for what needs to be done. Having my own privacy and being able to do what I want in front of WWOOFers. These have been really good for me. It could be really strengthening, it is another example of how WWOOF hosting is so much more than getting somebody to work for you. You grow in your own personal strengths from having WWOOFers. (Rachel, Farmer/WWOOFer)

Like Rachel, Mary had learned to be confident in what she wanted to communicate to her WWOOFers. The next example of Mary's personal growth shows that it was not easy for her to be open and to express her needs directly. As Mary became a more experienced host, she felt more confident and empowered, and her communication skills improved.

...[T]here were only two WWOOFers, ... that I had a serious problem [with]. And I decided that the problem was the communication one. So I said them: "These are my problems." One replied: "I see what problems are, but I think I am not contributing to this problem." But then they changed! What was the problem? No idea. Now I am very happy with them, and I think there is a much more positive outcome for us all rather than sitting there and squishing your teeth for 10 days and thinking: "God, [I] do not know why they are here!" I think I am learning to be more assertive in my own home and a little bit clearer. It feels good. (Mary, Farmer)

A further aspect of crossing the threshold of personal growth was growing emotionally and feeling fulfilled and content. The following quotations demonstrate that participants perceived WWOOFing as a meaningful experience in their lives. For example, Alice said:

We do tend to have some deep, meaningful conversations with people about their lives. As hosts, we generally hope that WWOOFers leave here with the better idea of what to do and of what they are capable of. We want to empower them by our example, and sometimes I am so happy when we get feedback that we managed that! (Alice, Farmer)

About half the participants mentioned that they had gained a sense of achievement through WWOOFing. On the one hand, farmers felt fulfilled when they were able to pass on their knowledge and skills to the WWOOFers. On the other hand, WWOOFers felt content when they have learned new skills. In the next excerpt, Alice describes her teaching-learning experience with WWOOFers. She confirmed that many WWOOFers at her farm enjoyed being assigned a specific project. Having their own project provided a learning experience and closure. The WWOOFers then felt proud when they showed the results of the complete project to the farmer.

They loved it here! Because they could stay here for 10 days (or more), they have no costs, they were well fed, they had a bunch of young people to be with, and they had a specific project. In the end, when completed, they have pride in that project. And I am very proud that I contributed to it and taught them new skills. It is an amazing feeling. (Alice, Farmer)

Many WWOOFers in this research confirmed Alice's ideas regarding the small projects she gives to her WWOOFers. Participants reported that they experienced a sense of achievement after the project was completed. A sense of achievement was crucial to feeling good.

I enjoy the sense of achievement you get when you have done a task. You finished the task, and you have done it well, and you learnt something while you were doing it. For example, in one place where I WWOOFed we were building some bamboo terraces, and it was a good sense of achievement when we finished it, and we saw the finished product and how it looked and also the things I learnt while I was doing it and it was kind of creative. (Danny, WWOOFer)

The more value WWOOFers and farmers associate with the project task or endeavour to complete the task the greater the sense of achievement felt by the participants. In particular, volunteers stated that sometimes through the WWOOFing experience they gained a sense of personal achievement from their activities on the farm.

I like seeing instant results, like in a labyrinth garden here. It was crazy overgrown, but then we said: "Wow, there are rocks and paths." Making gardens, like you clear the area, turn up all the soil, making the beds, it looks really nice. I guess I like

most the results. At farms where you cannot make a complete project I feel like I need closure like I need to see it and it would have been nice if I could see how it did turn out. (Eva, WWOOFer)

As in Eva's description of getting a sense of achievement many WWOOFers enjoyed having small projects as a part of their WWOOFing experience. When WWOOFers worked on a single part of a large farm project or task, they were not always able to see the bigger picture and the overall goal. Thus, WWOOFers failed to see the part they had played in the larger scheme of the farm and simply saw themselves as helping the farmer with more mundane farm activities. The farmers who noticed this, also reported that this sense that they were doing nothing special sometimes led to a lack satisfaction on the part of some WWOOFers, and could at times result in a decrease in their motivation, focus, and satisfaction. To deal with that issue, some farmers have adopted a practice of assigning a small project to their WWOOFers. For example, Linley recalled how she and her WWOOFers had built a tunnel house; other hosts remembered WWOOFers who had helped to fix the fence in the chickens' area. One of the small projects I experienced was the development of a pond. Our task was to bring the stones and to place them around the pond. We also planted some plants and cleaned the pond. I remember feeling good about the work done and also seeing the smile and satisfaction in my host's eyes.

As alluded by examples of Rachel and Mary on page 157, one further aspect related to personal growth is being able to manage the communication challenges. Most of the participants mentioned communication as the biggest challenge in WWOOFing relationships. While talking about communication, people usually spoken of the language barrier and cultural differences. The language barrier was mentioned as the most challenging thing in WWOOFing relationships by the majority of WWOOFers. Most of the WWOOFers admitted that often it was hard for them to talk in a different language.

For me, the language is very difficult. I do not understand everything if people do not speak very slowly. So I say: "yes, yes, yes, yes." What other difficult things are?! Then, the culture is difficult, but I can adapt to a lot of things. I think that I am very flexible, so I can. I think. (Xavier, WWOOFer)

Even for WWOOFers who spoke English as a first language, communication and culture challenges were issues which could potentially cause problems. Although Eva came from Canada, and English is her first language, she also

experienced cultural and communication challenges as a WWOOFer in New Zealand.

There are always moments in which I like interpreting things. Say, when someone explained to you a thing, and you did not really get it. Because some things are very obvious to the host but to you, you do not really know what they mean. Like a misunderstanding. And also a language barrier. It is hard because all the places are different, challenges can be as well when you do not get alone, but so far it has been pretty good for me. (Eva, WWOOFer)

Many farmers agree that language differences unbalance the WWOOFing experience for both farmers and WWOOFers and create barriers to be negotiated, but they also commented on cultural differences as a problem.

Communications is the biggest challenge. I am not a huge good communicator and a) you have language barriers and b) you have cultural differences. And then you have differences from someone who comes from the office and never worked on a farm, or done manual labour. And this is a huge thing that you have to realise that you have to show someone to weed or how to use the shovel. (Mary, Farmer)

Although most of the farmers shared Mary's experience, there was one farmer who said that she had no problem if WWOOFers are not fluent in English.

But I did take people who would not speak English very well. I would not care about that. Japanese were quite hard case as everything was about honour and saving face. They would never let you know if they did not understand. So I had to get them to repeat back and what you want them to do to save face for them. Everything was about saving face. (Tessa, Farmer)

Previous WWOOFing research has similarly confirmed that WWOOFers' lack of English language skills and cultural misunderstandings could lead to a problem in farmers-WWOOFers relationships (Alvarez Villanueva, 2012; Burns, 2015; Cronauer, 2012; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). However, many of the WWOOFers interviewed for this research were clearly aware of these issues and were ready to adapt and be flexible; they were then to cross those thresholds. A comment from Noa supported that argument; he said that "The most important thing is if you are friendly and you have to adapt to the farmer's family. As a WWOOFer you need to be respectful to the farmer and to be respectful and 'organic' in your mind". Other WWOOFers thought the same way and talked about the ability to be flexible and make compromises. For example, Angelika thought that

In WWOOFing you should be ready to make compromises. It is not always clear, for example, when you share accommodation with others, so you have tasks which are not usual. When you go abroad, you need to be aware of the different culture and the way of doing things. You need to adjust to the idea that you will maybe test your borders and sometimes help other people although it is not your task. You can also get to know other nationalities; I think it is twice as good (Angelika, WWOOFer)

Both the farmers and WWOOFers interviewed for this research agreed that being respectful, culturally sensitive and flexible were crucial for smooth communication, even if there was a language barrier. Being respectful to each other and being aware of the communication challenges which form part of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience made for a better, more balanced experience for both the farmers and their WWOOFers and the means by which cultural and linguistic thresholds were navigated. George underlined the importance of the respect in WWOOFing relationships:

It is important to treat them with respect, and they should treat you with respect as well. As a host, you should give them a chance to show what they could do. They might start a bit slow, but develop[ing] their skills is important. I like to see them grow here with us. (Gregory, Farmer)

This section has provided several examples of how farmers and WWOOFers grew personally by participating in the WWOOF programme. This section has described how participants saw the WWOOFing experience as a threshold or a point of transition or a starting point for their personal growth. The element of personal growth seems to be an inherent component of the social construction of the WWOOFing experience. The following section discusses WWOOFing as a threshold of limit or a point beyond which a new or different life begins for participants. The following section discusses the examples of WWOOF experiences which led to the significant changes in the lives of the participants.

4.2.2.3 Significant Changes in Life

One of the sub-themes to emerge from the data was 'significant changes in life'. In this connection, a threshold is seen as a limit or boundary. Going beyond this threshold altered either the participants' life philosophy and ideals or experience or brought about significant changes in the life of farmers or WWOOFers. This sub-theme is illustrated by the participants' stories about the circumstances and experiences which led to such life changes and which explain what role the WWOOF programme played in that transformation. The first story

from Tessa describes the life events which influenced her decision to first go WWOOFing and then to become a WWOOF host.

I got into organics when I was very young. I was about 18-19. And I got into organics because I was a hippie and that is what we all did. We were very keen on the environment avoiding pesticides and herbicides, and we did not really understand about it. I understand a lot better now. And you know just living the hippie dream, really. And it was really deep. I had never had WWOOFers when I was here with my first husband. It was only when Ron and I got two kids here. In the beginning, I was living here alone with my son. I loved organics, and I wanted company and some help on the farm. So I joined WWOOFing. I thought it would be good for everybody. It would be good for kids to have new people. So that is why I thought of WWOOFers. They were good for us, they gave us a hand with stuff, and we had a great time. Over the years we had some really good ones through, and they just built stuff and done stuff, it was a great time. (Tessa, Farmer)

Another example was provided by John. After some significant events in his life, he decided to relocate from the North Island and settle down in the Upper South Island region. He bought a property and wanted to develop it. His new friends and neighbours inspired his interest in biodynamics and permaculture principles. Since he settled in the Upper South Island his ideals changed and he started to learn about organics, gardening, and farming principles.

I knew nothing about WWOOFing when I came to live here. A friend, who was very passionate about organics said: "Ohh, you bought a house, you need to know what is going on with organics. You need to be able to do it in a right way. So come and do this course, because it will really help you". We got talking about it more, and it got my interest. It was just a week after I moved on to the property. Almost at the same time, I and my neighbour went to get fish and chips one night, and there was this German guy in town. And we started talking to him, and we invited him to stay. He began working, and he stayed here a month. And it was really neat. He was just on holiday, he was not WWOOFing, but it turned into a WWOOFing situation. Since then, 26 years [have] passed and I[ve] hosted more than 2000 people here. (John, Farmer)

Both extracts provide interesting examples of how farmers became interested in organic farming principles which led in part to their involvement in WWOOFing. The sub-theme 'significant changes in life' also came up in discussions with a few WWOOFers. Some of the participants were in the midst of changing their careers or were in the process of changing their worldviews and life philosophy. One WWOOFer, Jacques, had quit his job as he had become tired of the daily routine in the office where he worked. He decided to travel.

Previously, he had heard about WWOOFing from his friends and he saw it as a life-changing opportunity.

It [WWOOFing] is what I do now. It is my present and future for the next six months. Yes, it is important, and it is an important step in my life because I am doing something completely different. This experience may impact my future, at least my professional situation because people may say: "I do not know it, what you did in New Zealand, but I do not like it. (Jacques, WWOOFer)

For Eva, the WWOOFing experience provided thinking space. Eva had just graduated with a science degree, but had decided that she was not interested in working in her profession. However, she was not sure how she wanted to change her life. When I met her, she talked about the WWOOF programme as a way to understand what she really wants in the future. The WWOOF programme provided Eva with an opportunity to think for herself, to observe, to analyse, and to discover new things while she was travelling.

I think at this point in my life it is quite important because I am changing gear from hard-core science, marine biology stuff, to more community-oriented, self-sufficient living. In a way, it is connected to marine biology, but it is totally different. I see WWOOFing as an easy way to try myself in a different role. I am not sure what I will do in the future. For now, I am a WWOOFer, and I see new things, I learn new things, and I observe everything. (Eva, WWOOFer)

The examples given illustrate the stories of WWOOFers who had started to experience change even before becoming WWOOFers. The following examples illustrate the changes in WWOOFers lives that relate to events surrounding the WWOOFing experience itself.

For example, Erik's first WWOOFing experience turned out to be a life-changing experience. During his travels in Australia, he had run out of money for his trip and was thinking of options that would allow him to continue travelling. From his fellow backpacker travellers, he heard of the WWOOF scheme and learned that he could work in exchange for food and accommodation. At that moment in Eric's life, WWOOFing offered a perfect opportunity. During this time working as a WWOOFer, he changed his worldviews. His first WWOOFing experience and the new knowledge he obtained from it significantly changed his subsequent direction of his life path.

I signed up there and went up to this farm in North Queensland. It is a tropical place, and that really changed a lot for me, the whole perspective of life, and there was a really

interesting guy, I went up to there. And I started thinking a lot about sustainability, food, and our role on this planet. (Erik, WWOOFer)

Another example of a life-changing experience was provided by Rachel. She remembered a couple of WWOOFers hosted by John, who changed their job and started their own business after their New Zealand WWOOFing experience.

Rachel: The first time they were here they had been influenced by John and permaculture. They went back home and ran their own vegetable growing farm.

John: They bought land and ran the commercial gardens, and it was because they were impressed here.

Rachel: When they came to visit the second time they were very happy to see John.

John: Yeah, true. I know that it is quite a scary thing that we actually change people's life's in a way. They have gotten away from here and gone 'wow, wow' because we have emotionally engaged with them. And we have given them the time and validation to be themselves. We showed them that you could be yourself and it is easy here. But it is harder when you step out and back to your real world, but it gives them a glimpse of how it can be. I know that we have touched a lot of people's hearts over the time, and it is kind of scary but also really good.

Farmers commented that some WWOOFers were impressed by how easy it is to grow vegetables for one's own use. Other farmers told stories of how WWOOFers had mastered different tools which they had never used before and other ways in which they were influenced by the alternative lifestyle which they had experienced on the farmer's property. Chris and Liz provided a further story about how the WWOOFing experience led to a change in the lives of WWOOFers.

Chris: It does happen that people come to New Zealand and they do both: they are tourists and come under the 'working holidays' scheme. And when they are here, and if they do not have too much money left, they go WWOOFing. Which might be a negative thing, but they also learn about organics on WWOOF farms. And when they go home they learn more of those sustainable ideas that they normally had not had. And also a lot of people experience some change. We had a few people who changed their occupation after going WWOOFing in New Zealand.

Liz: I think those two boys about four years ago started something with goats in Germany.

Chris: Yeah, so they started off as backpacker tourists. They worked in between for money and then they came to us.

Liz: Those two boys were doing 'working holidays' and were picking apples on the farm nearby. They were 21 or something. After some time, they came to us. They stayed here and were WWOOFing with us for a while. And they decided that they got more benefit from WWOOFing in terms of getting experience and learning all different things than working on the orchard for money. So the orchard work was quite similar day to day. They were picking apples, but by doing WWOOFing they learned so much more, and it was important to them to live with locals and learn all these things. We went fishing and hunting. It was more about getting all experiences by WWOOFing. It was so interesting to hear from young people that getting the experience was more important than getting the money. (Liz, Farmer)

Hence, WWOOFing deepens the ordinary experiences of manual labour. As the above examples show, some WWOOFing experiences led to a change of the participants' life philosophy or career choices or altered their lifestyle in general. In this research, I encountered three WWOOFers who had joined the WWOOF programme because they wanted to develop new skills for their future career. Those WWOOFers chose particular farms and relied on the specific knowledge and experience of their hosts. Thus, those volunteers made sure that their objectives matched with their hosts' skills. In a way, these volunteers gained invaluable benefits from the WWOOF programme which allowed them to obtain professional knowledge without the need to complete the appropriate education. In these cases, the participants had specifically chosen to participate in WWOOFing in order to gain knowledge from an arborist, a shepherd, and a farmer who grows vegetables commercially.

For example, Erik, a young IT professional's perspective on life had changed during his first overseas WWOOFing experience. This WWOOFing experience had impacted his interest in organic farming, biodynamics, and permaculture principles. When he returned home to Sweden, he worked as an IT professional for some time, but it did not feel right to him. A few years later, he inherited a few hectares of land and decided to make a major change in his life. He quit his IT job, moved to the country, and then embarked on this second WWOOFing journey with a particular purpose in his mind.

I decided I want to start my own farm or live on a family farm. And I moved away from the city two years ago. And I am starting various projects, like growing my own food and stuff. I felt I needed some more knowledge and more ideas, so that is why I came to New Zealand this year to start WWOOFing. (Erik, WWOOFer)

Lea, too, had a significant change in her career. After dropping out of a law degree, she did a course in permaculture and organic farming in France. Lea came to New Zealand to gain practical skills in gardening and organic farming as she aspires to grow vegetables for farmers' markets back home. Another volunteer, Noa, also had a particular aim for his WWOOFing experience. Noa had an entrepreneurial idea of creating a sheep 'pet farm' in France. To implement his idea, instead of undertaking traditional education, he decided to go to New Zealand in order to get practical shepherd skills on a WWOOF farm.

Because in France I have a little idea to create a zoo only for sheep, with my brother together. And the fact is that we want to create a zoo about a different breed of sheep, maybe 25 kinds. But we know nothing about that. So the thing is, I said to my brother that I could learn that in New Zealand. (Noa, WWOOFer)

The examples above illustrate that the WWOOFing experience plays a central role in some participants' lives. WWOOFers who participated in this research were motivated and inspired by the examples of alternative lifestyles provided by their hosts. Moreover, some WWOOFers used the programme to gain practical and professional skills for their future business ideas or employment. All of these indicate that when participants are crossing the threshold of the encounter, personal growth and significant changes in life are an integral part of the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experience.

4.2.2.4 Summary

As it was illustrated above, participants in the WWOOF programme seek a meaningful encounter, cultural interactions, and opportunities for personal growth. WWOOFing experiences provide a platform for cultural encounters, personal growth and gaining a sense of achievement. Moreover, WWOOFing represents a learning and teaching experience, and sometimes it impacts and changes the participants' lives in highly significant ways.

4.2.3 Ideals

The theme of ideals became evident throughout the research process as participants quite passionately described integral parts of their lives. For a number of participants, involvement in the WWOOF programme allows them to live by their ideals. In this context, an ideal is a principle that is actively pursued by a farmer or WWOOFer as a life purpose. In this research, participants' ideals are of particular importance as they dictate the guidelines or rules which participants set for themselves. The theme of ideals is divided into three sub-

themes; these are: 1) food ideals, 2) living in the ideal world, and 3) mutual interest. These ideals are an important element of the social construction of the WWOOFing experience. The first sub-theme describes participants' interest in growing and eating healthy and nutritious food. The second sub-theme explains participants' desire to create a suitable environment which allows them to live by their ideals and pursue personal goals in the context of WWOOFing. The third sub-theme relates to the relationships between farmers and WWOOFers and encompasses a social component of the WWOOFing experience. A number of the participants in this research stated that, ideally, both parties participating in the exchange should have a mutual interest and, thus, more balanced relationship with each other.

4.2.3.1 Food

A number of participants reported that their interest in healthy food was a key component of their life and thus the WWOOF experience. The participants mentioned that they enjoyed organic farming and seeing the food grow. The following excerpt is from John, who describes the cycle of food production and how he teaches his WWOOFers to understand the whole circle.

A lot of people do not understand the relationship between getting your hands into the soil, making compost and eating dinner. I have had a lot of people who come here, and I will get them to plant some seeds, and they will go "Wow, I wish I was here to eat it." But they get only [the] eating part of it. But I say: "You are actually eating the food tonight that somebody else planted six weeks ago, you [are] actually eating the pickles that I have made with another WWOOFer who was here 2 years ago, so you are actually the part of this big cycle." And they go: "Ohh, right." What grows well in the garden goes well in the kitchen. For me, it is important if people ask me what I am doing in the kitchen. I am showing them how to make compost, means to make food. And I will explain it to them. (John, Farmer)

This description of the importance of the food cycle is also connected to the first theme of dirt where some of the participants talked about the fact that they enjoyed getting their hands dirty and planting vegetables. With experience, many WWOOFers come to understand these elements and their connection in the cycle of food production.

Most of the farmers in this research lived rurally, and as one of their life's ideals, they pursued the growing of healthy and nutritious food. For farmers, like Chris, WWOOFing provided an opportunity "...to live on the land in order to have [my] own organic fruit, meat, and vegetables," (Chris, Farmer). Other WWOOF

farmers, especially those who own a small property, stated that they were keen to grow as many food plants for their kitchen as possible. For example, John who had a one-acre property applied various organic gardening techniques and his permaculture knowledge to maintain a tiny but productive vegetable garden.

I do not eat meat, milk and eggs and, therefore, I do not need animals here. I am not a vegan; I eat cheese. I do not have a big property to have a house cow, for example, and then have to deal with the calf. So I do not even want to go down that path. I grow vegetables which we eat here all year around. And permaculture principles allow that circle to exist. It is amazing. (John, Farmer)

These extracts show the connection between organic farming and food production as a way to live the ideal of a sustainable life on the land. In her story Alice described the way she dealt with the demand for food at her property in terms of hosting many WWOOFers around the year.

There are two kinds of work about food here. The first is to manage the garden and the second is to manage the number of WWOOFers we have. It is a circle: if we would not have many WWOOFers, we would not need a lot of food, and would not have such a big garden which in turn needs a lot of work, you know. Anyway, for us, we believe that providing healthy food for people who are here, workers and WWOOFers, is really important. Antony believes that it is at the top of the list, and there is nothing else on the list. If people want to come here and eat junk food, we would not want them here. Our idea is, we do our very best to give people the best food we can. And so some people come with different needs, allergies and we try to find food that really suits them and encourage them. Like if it does not suit you to drink milk, do not drink it, do not eat cheese; cut that out, try something else. So that is the philosophical thing which is very important, which means that a lot of the work is about food generation, either in the vegetable garden and orchard or the house cows: milking, making cheese, caring for pigs and chickens, and collecting eggs.

This weekend we are going to kill meat chickens. Chicken killing is quite an experience, and people do not have to do it unless they want to participate in it. And from experience, a lot of people appreciate the opportunity because after all, they know where the food is coming from.

So we grow pigs, egg-laying chickens, lambs and sheep and we have a big vegetable garden and an orchard. Actually two different orchards. And the second one is an apple orchard. It has been here for three months, and all the trees come from old fruit trees from this region. All the trees are apples. We either know the variety or where it came from. We[ve] got the labels for the majority of them. We have 29 trees now, and we will get another 20, and then we will let the public

come in and pick apple trees and have a picnic in the orchard, this is very cool to be involved in. It is ours, but we need to be involved with the public, open it once a year. We just want for these heritage trees to continue to survive. This was a really nice project we did this year. The second orchard is a normal orchard with a variety of fruit trees. (Alice, Farmer)

Here, Alice also mentioned her and her partner's philosophy in relation to healthy food and WWOOFing and she spoke about her wish to sustain heritage apple trees for the future. All these could be described as the food ideals of this particular WWOOF host. Many of the WWOOFers interviewed for this research showed their interest in food too.

Some of the WWOOFers I encountered mentioned that they had decided to participate in the WWOOF programme in order to find out more about the food they eat or to learn new skills which would allow them to produce and grow their own food in the future. For example, Anna said: "In college, I was starting getting interested in where my food is coming from. I did not have time then. But now after I finished my degree I want to know more". Anna went WWOOFing in New Zealand, and became interested in organic gardening and its connection to permaculture whilst there. A number of other WWOOFers reported similar interests in food production and gardening.

I am still learning about organic farming because in the future I'd like to produce some of my own food. So for me, it is useful to do WWOOFing and learn about the ways you can do that. In a way that is kind of efficient to [the] environment and humans. (Danny, WWOOFer)

I just prefer organic anyway. I have been vegan for three years and vegetarian before that. I try to eat as much organic as possible. I did not really want to work anywhere where I had to deal with pesticides. And so WWOOFing is like a great alternative for me. (Eva, WWOOFer)

I started to be interested in being self-sufficient and I have started to think of something different, to be my own master and to be self-sufficient and to grow my own food maybe and live off the land a bit and closer to nature, and then I have heard of WWOOFing. (Alex, WWOOFer)

I enjoy learning. I am really keen to learn how to be self-sufficient, how to make cheese and other things from milk, how to deal with animals and what products they could produce. (Angelika, WWOOFer)

Both farmers and WWOOFers mentioned the importance of food in their life. Part of the 'ideal' discourse within WWOOFing is the opportunity of being independent and self-sufficient. Another important aspect of food ideals in

WWOOFing mentioned by the research participants was the opportunity to have shared meals. For instance, for many farmers and WWOOFers, having a shared meal is one of the ideal ways of engaging in the WWOOFing experience. Participants agreed that meal times offered a unique opportunity for dialogue and discussion. Milena said that "...an important part of the WWOOF exchange is when they let you in their life, so you can have dinner with them. For me, it is the very personal thing to have dinner with someone". Other farmers and WWOOFers talked of the importance of food rituals as a form of social exchange between WWOOFing participants.

And then I make a big dinner at the end of the day, and that is really the best part of the day. It gives people the power to do their own thing and relax. And I think it is really important. It is a time of sitting around and communicating. It is time we all sit together, regardless if [it's] only the family of four of us or with 10 WWOOFers. We communicate and we share food, which was partly grown here and it is part of our life and that connection and communication is the most important thing. (John, Farmer)

I enjoy the food, communal meals; we used to dine outdoors. It was in the south-west of France where for nine months of the year there is a blue sky; it is like California. We used to sit surrounded by valleys, rivers, hills, stone buildings and discuss everything: the weather, how did our day go, permaculture techniques, gardening ideas from various countries and other things. (Alex, WWOOFer)

The research findings reveal that growing or learning about how to grow your own food and gaining hands-on knowledge are important elements of the WWOOFing experience. Participants identify WWOOFing with being independent and self-sufficient in relation to food production and consumption. In WWOOFing, many farmers provide more than just an opportunity to grow food. They also teach WWOOFers about other elements connected to sustainable food production, for example, how to build structures, grow food all year around, and take care of animals. Social rituals related to food, for example shared meals, represent the core of WWOOFing ideals connected to food and thus create a foundation of the whole discourse of WWOOFing. This sub-theme overlaps with other themes, for example, getting one's hands dirty and sociocultural encounters.

4.2.3.2 Living in an Ideal World

This research has revealed another important component of the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience which is that some participants use the WWOOFing opportunity to create and live in an 'ideal' world.

Some of the farmers who participated in this research appeared to live by their specific ideals and to pursue a particular life philosophy which they contrasted with average 'normal' people's life. In this research, I visited several locations and interviewed several farmers who distinguished themselves from 'normal', 'mainstream' people. When farmers refer to the 'normal' life, they usually mean the western type of urban lifestyle with a full-time job from nine to five. While some of the participants chose to label their lifestyle, others simply preferred to describe it. For example, two farm hosts referred to themselves as hippies. Other participants, explained that their lifestyle was based on spiritual and esoteric principles. They highlighted that point by saying 'do not believe in Christmas' but, rather, worship a 'goddess'. As a part of their daily routine, some of the hosts had a practice of hugging the trees while nude. I also visited a property which specialises in commercial accommodation for the gay community. This property is popular with local and international visitors. The owners of the property run several events a year which target gay and nudist guests. One of the peculiarities of this property is a communal bathroom without doors or curtains, as people who stay there are open to nudity. This particular farm is at the heart of an inclusive community of likeminded individuals with a sustainable living philosophy. Though, the 'inclusiveness' is related only to people who accept and share values of the host.

The examples mentioned above represent rather special, 'niche' WWOOF farms. Most of the hosts in this research did not distinguish themselves from any other groups in the society and instead talked about their sustainable ideals in terms of rural life, food production, and their interest in organics, gardening and farming. At one rural WWOOF farm its owners shared their vision of an ideal village community:

We have a land up the road, and we would like to build a community (in the ideal world) that attracts like-minded people who want to share their skills but still own an individual piece of land. So that you have your own space, you are independent and are able to buy and sell your property (unlike it is in some communities around New Zealand). But at the same time, it would be great to unite people with [the] same community attitude. For example, if one does cheese and the other does bread people can exchange. And maybe it would be great to have a shop where people could bargain for the goods. And it's all within a small village community. And sometimes you could buy there, like in the supermarket. Buying in the supermarket is convenient. But in a community like this we could get [the] benefits of both: for example, to get the cheese, vegetables, fruits or the home ground flour.

Like if you do one thing, you do another, and the third person with his skills does something else. (Liz, Farmer)

The examples illustrated above represent not a marginalisation of a so-called 'normal' lifestyle; rather, they represent an 'ideal' lifestyle suitable for particular WWOOF farmers. All the examples above show how individuals involved in WWOOFing have their own life philosophy and live by their ideals. With the help of the WWOOF programme, they had created their ideal world on their property, and they enjoyed sharing it with others by accommodating WWOOFers. WWOOF farmers see the benefits of living alternatively in the rural setting and growing their own food. For example, Mary said she enjoys teaching WWOOFers about sustainable life by providing them with practical examples.

And as I said, to me it is like preaching a religion by example. I think the way I live is a very sustainable way of life, and I like to show people that you could live sustainably without running around naked in the bush with long hair smoking dope. You know, I do not think we live a hippie lifestyle anymore, but I do not think we damage the planet the way we live. So I think there is too much division between these two worlds: there are organic, vegan, vegetarian, hippie people and there are the conventional national people. And I think when we sit here I'd like to show people by example you can have the best of both worlds. So it is actually teaching people, what I enjoy the most. (Mary, Farmer)

Mary's example shows the importance of the educational and practical components of the WWOOFing experience. Farmers like Mary are convinced that it is possible to live a sustainable lifestyle through a combination of 'alternative world views' with more 'conventional world views' in their 'ideal' WWOOFing world. One example of Mary's lessons which impressed me was about homemade butter.

Today we got up early. Xavier and I accompanied Mary to feed the animals and milk the cow. Later, when we were having breakfast the butter on the table has finished. Mary said that that is no problem and jumped off the stool. We [WWOOFers] followed her into the kitchen area; she told us to watch. Next thing we saw is that she grabbed something out of the fridge (I guess it was the jar full of cream) and turned on her fancy mixer. A few minutes later we had more butter. It was really amazing. Each of us could have a go with the cream and mixer to make more butter. I have never thought that it is actually so easy. You never think of how butter is made when you grab it off the supermarket fridge shelf. Mary said that it is not the first time she shows WWOOFers how to do simple things like butter, or yoghurt, or cheese and most of them are amazed as they have never seen it before, as normally they would buy the stuff in the shop (Reflexive Journal).

Whereas many farmers participating in WWOOFing saw it as a part of their ideal world, some of the WWOOFers involved in the programme had different motivations. However, for some WWOOFers, participation in the programme helped them to come closer to their ideals at that particular moment in time. For many WWOOFers, this experience helped them to realise their aspirations and dreams. Most of the WWOOFers in this research decided to participate in the programme because they had free time, they wanted a change of scenery in their life or to change their occupation, in addition to wanting to acquire new skills and get to know different places and cultures.

One of the participants I met was travelling in New Zealand during annual leave from her main job. Amber was looking for a meaningful form of travel and wanted to learn some new skills she could use in her job. Four of WWOOFers I met mentioned that they were exhausted and stressed by their occupations and that WWOOFing provided them with the possibility of escaping from their daily routine. I also met farmers who reported that they had hosted WWOOFers who were burned out in their jobs and had decided to change their life by participating in WWOOFing. One of WWOOFers remembered:

I got tired in the big city. What I like about WWOOFing is living on the road, moving from one place to another every 10 days or so. So you are very autonomous, and at the same time you should not fail, you should look for new farms. It is very active. Also, doing WWOOFing in New Zealand is going to be very healthy for me, and I'm going to lose fat through working physically. (Jacques, WWOOFer)

Another of the study's participants was a freelance professional who went WWOOFing between employment contracts. Three participants decided to go WWOOFing in New Zealand to acquire professional skills for their future business. Another three WWOOFers decided to have a break from their previous job and go travelling with a purpose. Finally, five WWOOFers had just finished a major stage in their education and saw WWOOFing as a meaningful way to travel during their gap year.

4.2.3.3 Mutual Interest

Across the research findings, issues related to the social component of the WWOOFing exchange were especially prominent in the interview data. This sub-theme shows the importance of an ideal balance in the relationships between farmers and WWOOFers. The majority of the farmers and WWOOFers agreed that, ideally, it would be nice if both parties share a mutual interest, are curious about each other, and enjoy spending time together as a part of the WWOOFing

experience. In contrast, however, WWOOF participants also wanted others to have an understanding of the boundaries around the experience and to respect each other's privacy.

The findings of this research revealed that farmers who sought social interactions were very interested in welcoming new people. Farmers were especially interested in those WWOOFers with whom they shared common interests. For example, Mary enjoyed hosting WWOOFers who are passionate about sustainable life principles and gardening.

I enjoy the help, but I also enjoy most when I have a WWOOFer who is enthusiastic and really wants to learn about what it is we want to do. It is nice perhaps when I have people like Steffen and Jacques who are really good and will do a manual job all day. Which is actually quite a boring job, really because they have done the same thing in a row, which is quite boring and that is very useful and productive for us. But what is much more fun is when you have someone like Xavier, who has studied a lot about animals and really wants to learn. And you can discuss with him how do you do this in Spain, this is how we do it in New Zealand, why do you do it this way?
(Mary, Farmer)

However, above example shows that it would seem as if some member of WWOOFing 'community' have tight boundary and expectations that are not as diverse and flexible.

The social component of the socially constructed New Zealand WWOOFing experience was seen as a crucial element of WWOOFing by many farmers. Some hosts revealed that they get upset if WWOOFers are not interested in their life.

I have noticed that these guys never ask a single question, they are not interested in us. Sometimes volunteers do not really show any interest and ask personal questions. And these guys have not asked us a single thing. It is nice having them here, but I would like to have a conversation with WWOOFers who are interested in hosts. But it, if they are boring, shy or English, is bad; it becomes hard work. Some people come here, and they are a bit surprised about the way that we live because, for instance, we have this one communal bathroom, but it is interesting to explain it to them, to talk to them, to exchange with them. (George, Farmer)

Similarly, many WWOOFers see the social component as an important element of the WWOOFing experience. WWOOFers revealed that they enjoyed it when hosts were interested in them. Martin said that to him it is important when hosts "see me not only as a worker. I am interested in them that is why I am here. It is great to have a mutual interest in each other". Another WWOOFer,

Milena, described her desire to share her personality and her culture and the country where she comes from.

On a personal level, I really expect respect, and maybe what I hope for, is interest also in me, my ways of doing things, in my culture and acceptance of me being different because I come from somewhere else. That is really important. At least at previous places, all people showed a bit of interest for my cultural and personal background. That is one thing being a foreigner and being a person. You do not always go on a personal level because some people just want to get to know different cultures, but not get too close. But sometimes it clicks, and sometimes you have a desire to share, and sometimes you do not. (Milena, WWOOFer)

Danny went beyond the mutual social interest and wished that farmers would accept him as a part of the family.

And perhaps other things important for the exchange, which are nice to have are that they include you in the family life and to have good social time with them. Perhaps if they take a journey and if there is outside of WWOOFing time it is really good (Danny, WWOOFer)

The example provided by farmers and WWOOFers reveal that both parties seek social interactions as a part of the WWOOFing experience and wish for mutual interest in each other. However, the participants of this research were not only interested in social interactions. They also wished for an ideal balance and especially wanted respect in terms of privacy. Many farmers and WWOOFers complained about not having enough private time. It seemed that maintaining a balance was challenging. Sometimes hosts felt as if their personal space had been invaded, and that they did not have enough family time.

To start with, we were quite invaded, and I knew it has nothing to do with [the] people who were here. It is not that anyone was doing anything wrong. For me, it was just difficult having other people in my space, even their different accents disturbed me. Like, for example, I would start to hear that accent in my head even [when] I was thinking my own thoughts, so it was as [if] that person was in my head. It was intense, but that does not happen anymore. So I had to learn how to deal with that and, as I say, it has nothing to do that anybody did something wrong. We have also got a rhythm of having people here. We have breaks, so we kind out worked out what works for us as a family. (Linley, Farmer)

Over time, hosts admitted that they were able to learn how to create a balance by having intervals between their WWOOFers' stays. This practice allowed them to have a rest from having foreign people in the house and allowed space for

family time. Mary and her family worked out a way of hosting WWOOFers based on the season and number of jobs which needed to be done.

I decided that I actually do not need to cope with people for weeks. Now we host people if we need a job to be done, and we usually take time for us, for the family after a period of hosting. (Mary, Farmer)

The following conversation between John and Rachel revealed how two hosts could have different approaches to WWOOFing and how they tried to manage these differences within one family.

Rachel: John's policy has always been 'open home': people come, people go. He had not so many boundaries. I was brought up in a way where you always know people who are in your home. And I wanted a more open home, but here it was a bit too open and it was a bit challenging. John used to have people overlapping and lots of WWOOFers for a long period of time. But we changed the style to suit my emotional needs. Partly, because I said "I cannot cope with it, I need a break, where we are just family, just us with the boys. I need time with no WWOOFers", and now we got around doing that.

John: We host all year around, but it has changed since the balance issue was in the scene. For me 365 days a year is no problem at all. I personally do not have as much need for personal space. I am fine, but Rachel does. And now we do have gaps between WWOOFers and those gaps are really important to Rachel and to our relationships. I think it is ok to have those gaps now, but if Rachel was not here, I would be happy to go back the way it was.

Rachel: John is a person with different boundaries and less boundaries than me. Do you think John? But do we work as a WWOOF hosts team?

John: Yeah, I think we actually do. Rachel fine-tunes what I throw out generally.

Rachel: Yeah, he is like two-thirds of the team, and I am one-third.

John: I believe that people need to be given the opportunity to understand from their own perspective what the balance of exchange should be and so that is why my boundaries became quite loose, whereas Rachel wants to spell it out to them in fine detail 'what the balance should be'.

Rachel: John trusts people, he is like: "Well, so ok, they ate all the honey, the universe provides more." And I am kind of scared. And because of the way I was brought up I think of money with the honey example. I also believe that people work better if the boundaries are spelt out. So we have

different approaches. And I often have to say: "Ok, walk away, never mind."

Some hosts have established written rules relating to private spaces within the house. Nevertheless, farmers mentioned that sometimes it is hard to maintain those rules. In the following extract, Alice shared her experience regarding the rules on her farm. She explained that even if the boundaries have been set, WWOOFers did not necessarily follow them.

We have not got it right at all. And then the other practical challenge is that we have people in the house. It is very seldom that we would come down and this room is not full of WWOOFers, and they are calling home or just use the internet. Christmas morning someone was skyping at six am, we never heard him, but we told him how to get in quietly. So we have young people in our home all the time. And if we are here on our weekend off, we say: "You are not allowed to come into the house," but they still leave notes on the door. There is no room left up for us; it is like having 10 children the whole time. (Alice, Farmer)

Linley shared a somewhat similar experience in terms of following the rules. Her farm created a family-like atmosphere, and WWOOFers felt very welcome. In her house, the family members' bedrooms were private spaces and not accessible to WWOOFers. When she introduced WWOOFers to the farm and gave a tour around the house, and she tried to communicate this rule to them. In the next example, she talks about balance and private spaces.

And there was one amazing WWOOFer. He was so trying to be so helpful. He was going to help me with chocolate cake. I keep the chocolate in the bedroom, so it does not get eaten (by my kids or WWOOFers). And I said him: "Wait, I am just going to grab the chocolate," and he followed me into the bedroom! You know it was sort of weird. (Linley, Farmer)

For Linley, the bedroom was a very private space, and she felt awkward when she was followed into it by a WWOOFer who just wanted to help. In the end, she thought that this case was a classic example of cultural differences and maybe ways and traditions related to upbringing. Other farmers provided similar examples, showing that even when the rules had been clearly laid out there was still a mismatch in some situations. For example, in another instance, a farmer mentioned the difficulty of dealing with long-term WWOOFers who stayed on the farm for more than three months and became part of the family.

I think we had [an] interesting experience this year. It was when we had those long-term people, who have been awesome. Overall it was positive, but after [a] time they got

a bit of pressure about the work they were doing, and they were not willing to be told what to do. (Alice, Farmer)

Another issue related to privacy was concerned with the privacy and personal time of the WWOOFers. The research findings revealed that it was also hard for WWOOFers to find personal time. Some farmers always wanted to engage with their WWOOFers socially and discuss interesting things. Others had loose schedules during the day, and WWOOFers had trouble identifying work time and free time. On the property of Chris and Liz, the boundaries between work and social time were fairly loose, but Chris found a way to deal with it.

When we have WWOOFers coming, we try to explain our routine and how stuff on the property works, not that we have a strong routine. And often one challenge we had is the balance between the work and the social side of it. One problem we had is that we have a good social life, so when one day we have not done much, next day it is hard to tell that we need start working in the morning. It is an interesting relationship, and that is why we explain things, and we do things together, and you don't have to say 'now it is time for your working'. It is easier. (Chris, Farmer)

The strategy of working together worked well for other farmers. Linley once said: "I'm not always able to work together with them in the garden because I need to do some stuff for the farm on a computer or in the town. But, I certainly don't expect them to work when I rest". WWOOFers reported that they most enjoyed working side by side with a farmer or being assigned small projects. Surprisingly, most of the WWOOFers were very flexible regarding the extended working hours if they liked the host or worked together. They admitted that it was not a problem to voluntarily work more hours than agreed if the relationships between the farmer and the WWOOFer were positive. A few WWOOFers mentioned that they did not mind helping outside an average four to six hours a day (the norm hours for WWOOFers in most places).

When you are in another family's house, you must be involved in their things. For me, it is not only working four- five hours, but I like helping people. I do not stop working after four- five hours and go out. If they need something I could do, I will help. Or if one day they say "Today you could have a free day and go out", it is ok with me. I prefer to be part of their life, but I also like to have my own time. (Xavier, WWOOFer)

I guess it depends on what they say. And how much I work. If I work four- five hours, then I get accommodation, and they get me a meal every day. Like not to feel weird if I go to the kitchen to make my own stuff. I feel like there are boundaries. And also I want their understanding. Like if you work in the sun for a long time, and feel tired, and I think I need a break.

They should like to say "Ok it is fine, you can continue tomorrow". They should be able to recognise how well you are doing. And maybe asking "Are you enjoying this?" It should be work that you want to do, and in most places, it is a lot to be done, so you could change really easily. (Eva, WWOOFer)

Eva distinguished between paid 'working holidays' and WWOOFing. She felt that WWOOFing was about helping others and not working for others. She and other WWOOFers preferred farms which allowed them to be part of the hosts' family, to be flexible about time and to have a choice of tasks. However, some WWOOFers had had other experiences in New Zealand. In the following extract, Milena talked about the longer hours which WWOOFers worked on one farm.

Here, for example, it is always a communication issue as well. Maybe here, you are a volunteer only in theory. But actually, not. You are not helping, but you are working for food and accommodation full-time. Here you are doing more work than necessary. I really feel if they talk to you in a disrespectful way or like you are not doing enough. Look, we are doing more than we should and still they talk to WWOOFers this way. Like saying: "What have you done today?" Or "It is not enough, you should do more." You know, here no one will be able to connect with them. They don't want it; they just want your work. They are not interested in where I am from; they have not asked a single question about my country and culture. You know that is something as if they talk to me in this distant way. I think I will speak my mind at the end. (Milena, WWOOFer)

This extract shows that there is not always a balance in the WWOOFing relationships when there is no mutual interest for each other, and the communication seems one-sided. At this particular farm, Milena felt more like an employee and not a volunteer. She and other WWOOFers with similar motivations and genuine interest in organic farming preferred to stay on small-scale farms where the chance to establish mutual interest and the chance to connect with the farmer's family was higher. As such, the way in which ideals and relations are negotiated are important determinants of how the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is socially constructed.

4.2.3.4 Summary

The theme of ideals highlighted the ways in which the WWOOF programme allows participants to live by their ideals. In view of the evidence provided above, the WWOOF experience provides its participants with the opportunity to focus on personal ideals related to food and nutrition and particular ways of life. Additionally, this theme has touched on an important component of an 'ideal' WWOOFing relationship in that it suggested that if participants have a mutual

interest and actively engage on a social level, it is more likely that they will have more balanced and harmonious relationships with each other, and, thus, have a positive WWOOFing experience.

4.3 'Ideal' WWOOFing Experience as Constructed by Farmers and WWOOFers

The second research objective of this thesis: "To understand an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience as it is constructed by farmers and WWOOFers" was used as the main focus of the LSP workshop where participants aimed to build an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience. LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology is "based on research which shows that hands-on, minds-on learning produces a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the work and its possibilities" (Lego Serious Play, 2016). LSP method helps to solve complex issues with LEGO bricks. This method ensures everybody's participation in a creative group discussion by sharing the knowledge and understandings through the LEGO bricks and storytelling.

Aligned to the research paradigm, the LSP method was introduced as a creative and novel approach to hearing the participants' voices and understanding how they construct the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience. Although LSP is an open source methodology, I participated in facilitator training in order to be able to run a workshop and understand the scientific background of this methodology. I was introduced to the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® through the one-week training course run by one of the founding members of the Association of Master Trainers⁴ in the LSP method in July 2013. To gain experience before data collection, I began practising the LSP methodology in business and academia.

In opening up the LSP method in tourism research studies, I had two main concerns: 1) that constructing and explaining ideas metaphorically might be difficult for participants for whom English is a second language, and 2) that using LEGO might be understood as infantilising or trivialising the research, as most of people are familiar with LEGO as a construction toy. Also, from my previous LSP facilitation experience, I expected that some participants would be reluctant and suspicious of LSP as a research method. After the LSP

⁴ The members of the Association of Master Trainers deliver facilitator training and certification in the LSP method and aim to 1) guard, maintain and further develop the LSP method to ensure its integrity and high quality, and 2) secure that its members deliver an uniform and high quality training (Association of Master Trainers, 2017).

workshops, several participants admitted the extent of their uncertainty as seen here in the exact quote from one of the participants:

At the beginning, I did not believe that you are seriously using LEGO for your research. But now, after we have done it, and it was so much fun, I understand that it is not about bricks but about the stories you tell. Thanks for persuading me to participate. (Mike, Farmer).

Other participants commented that they enjoyed having the opportunity to be involved in a creative process and valued the possibility to share their LEGO models. Many participants enjoyed being in 'flow' while they were creating their models (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). This level of enjoyment is certainly found in the previous LEGO applications (Wengel et al., 2016). In particular, they enjoyed sharing and listening to stories of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Sharing not only their own stories but also seeing and listening to what others had created provided deeper meanings and understandings of how an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience was socially constructed by the participants of this volunteer farm tourism exchange programme.

As repeated in Chapter Three, during my fieldwork phase, I ran three LSP workshops on three farms. Each of the workshops lasted between three and a half and five hours and took place towards the end of my stay at the farm. Each of the workshops followed the four steps of LSP methodology:

- 1) question,
- 2) build,
- 3) share, and
- 4) reflect.

Two standard application techniques were applied: building individual models and stories and building a shared model.

The systematic process of linking metaphorical building combined with group discussion draws on Schön's (1983) view that metaphors provide innovative meanings in understanding things, events, and experiences. For example, a green LEGO brick may represent a plant or a new life and a polar bear is not just an animal, as a builder may, for example, use the bear model to indicate concepts or describe values and experiences. Figure 19 provides examples of how a polar bear could be represented with LEGO. For example, an artist Sean Kenny built a giant polar bear model from many LEGO bricks, the second photo

represents a polar bear in a form of a single LEGO Duplo figure and the third represents a polar bear as a metaphor consisting of only one LEGO Duplo brick.

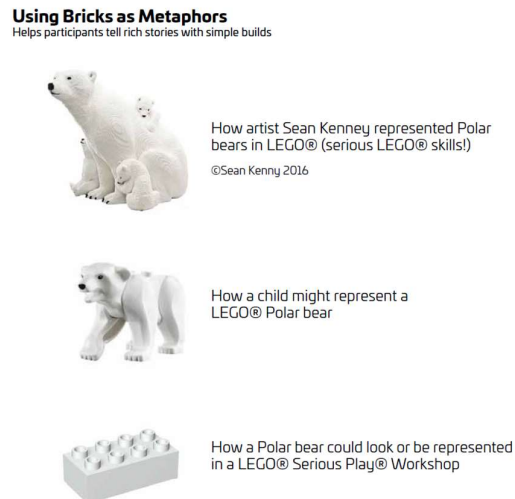


Figure 19. Using LEGO Bricks as Metaphors.

Source: Blair, S., & Rillo, M. (2016). Used with permission.

The LSP workshops allowed for a playful and creative process with the freedom to explore and to test the ideas without fear of saying something wrong. While participants assigned meaning to their individual models, they also assigned meaning to their stories and participated in the creation of an 'ideal' New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Two core themes were revealed through the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops. These themes are people and sharing. WWOOFing participants believed that an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience depended upon the people involved in it sharing things, activities, and experiences.

The workshops began with warm-up exercises. Here the goal was to familiarise the participants with the LSP methodology. In the initial stage of the workshop, participants built negative WWOOFing experiences. Some of the negative examples of the WWOOFing experience mentioned by the participants focused on a mismatch of expectations, communication, and cultural problems. The negative examples of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience also included the stories describing experiences when one party took advantage of the WWOOFing model and used it for that party's benefit. Mike, mentioned that most of the negative cases of WWOOFing experiences on his farm were

connected to the lack of engagement from WWOOFers: "We open our life, and our house and they are not connecting, they are not interested in all of these." Similarly, some WWOOFers commented that they met hosts who were only interested in them as a labour force and were not interested in social engagement with a WWOOFer. These examples reflected the findings from the interviews conducted for this research. To understand the positive experiences in WWOOFing, participants were asked to build models representing their positive experiences. Many participants presented stories related to the interaction between people. Many of the elements that came out of the LSP workshops informed the themes emerged from the interviews, but this section focuses primarily on uncovering the essential elements of the socially constructed 'ideal' WWOOFing experience.

According to the outcomes of the LSP workshops, one core element of WWOOFing is people. Participants commented that in WWOOFing farmers and WWOOFers were representative ambassadors of their countries and cultures. Charlotte called WWOOFing "the bridge between the cultures." Most of the participants mentioned their interest in socialising with foreigners, and hence learning and understanding other cultures. Linley's family enjoyed having WWOOFers. Describing his positive experience with WWOOFers, Mike mentioned that he enjoyed engaging with international people on his farm because "they bring the world to us". This particular idea was mentioned by other farmers during the interviews. Figure 20 below represents Mike's point.

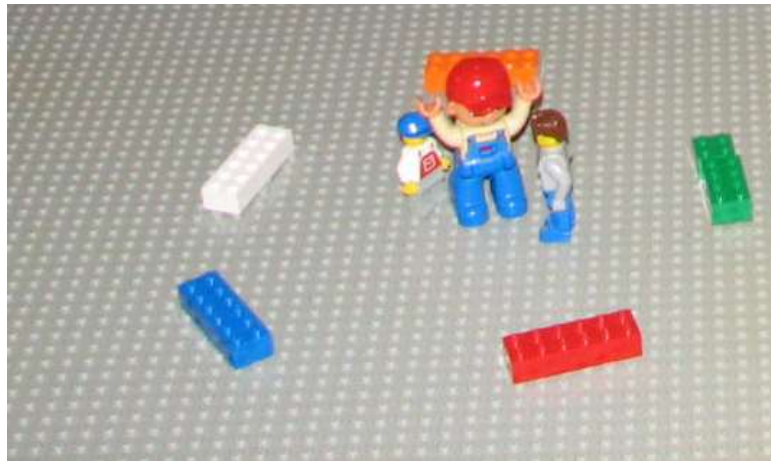


Figure 20. "The World is Coming to Me" Model.

The different shape and colour of bricks in this model represent WWOOFers coming from various countries, and the central element in this model is the

farm and the host's family. During the LSP workshops, farmers mentioned that they enjoyed the interaction with WWOOFers and enjoyed seeing WWOOFers connecting with locals and nature.

At one of the farms, the farmer's teenage children participated in the LSP workshop. Caleb mentioned that he enjoyed 'hanging out with WWOOFers', talking to them, and playing games. His model of people spending time together is represented in Figure 21.

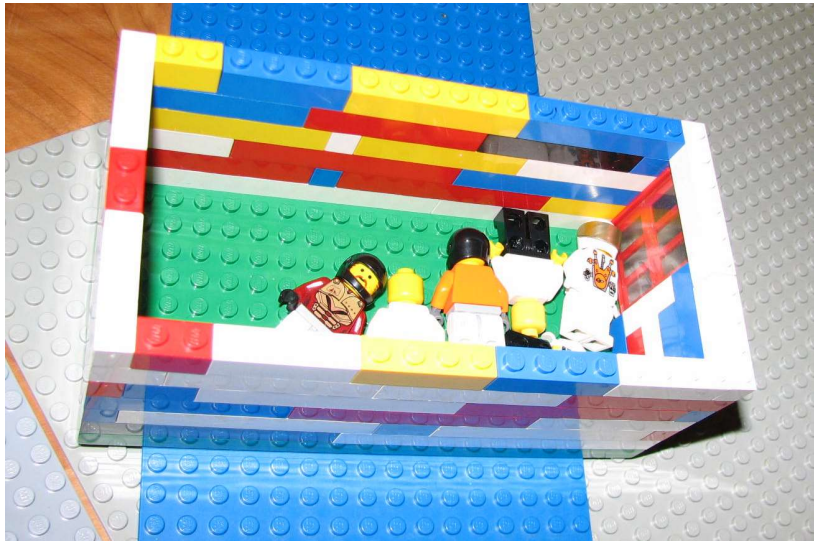


Figure 21. Model of the Social Interactions in WWOOFing.

This model represents a farm and the hosts' house, and the mini figures inside represent WWOOFers and the farmer's family spending time together. As noted during the interviews, farmers commented on the isolation on farms situated in remote locations and highlighted the social benefits of having WWOOFers. These ideas were also confirmed during three LSP workshops.

The second crucial component of an 'ideal' New Zealand WWOOFing experience relates to people not only sharing work, food, social time but also people sharing rules. The models created by the participants described that, ideally, farmers and WWOOFers would share work, work side by side, or work at the same time. In this way, the balance within the relationships could be established, as neither party felt disadvantaged. In many models, participants included elements representing animals or gardening. The figure below represents five models describing WWOOFing experience with plant and/or animals. Participants used many LEGO elements representing plants and LEGO

bricks in green color. Many of the participants added the figures of the animals to draw the connection between humans, farm animals and plants.

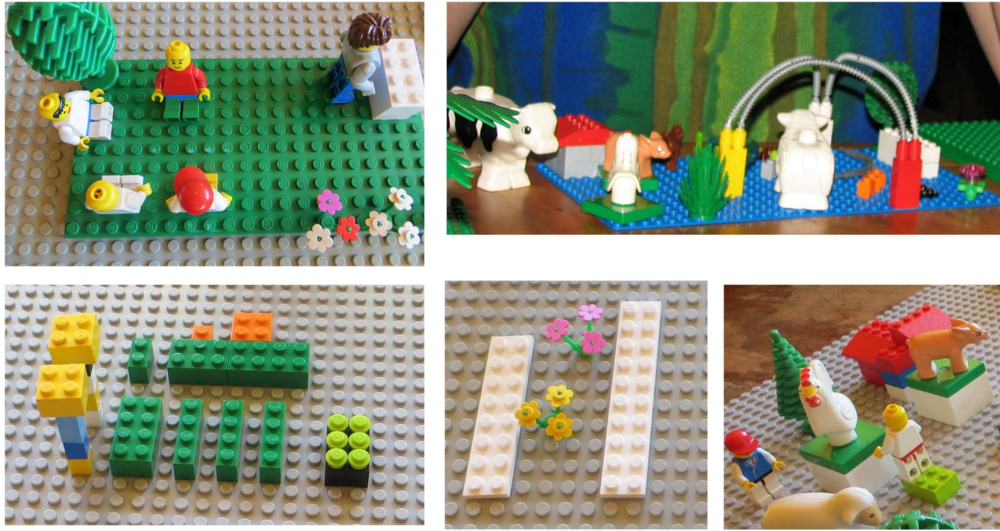


Figure 22. Examples of Individual Models.

Participants highlighted that being close to nature, working with animals and plants was a distinguishing feature of WWOOFing and distinguished WWOOFing from programmes like Couchsurfing or Help-X.

Some models built by farmers or WWOOFers related to food. Some models were focused on gardening and food production. One of the participants built a model of compost (Figure 23). The compost model represents one m³ of compost. Different LEGO bricks represent different elements of which compost is made of.



Figure 23. Compost Pile Model.

The transparent window in the front has a metaphorical meaning of compost as a central element of food growing cycle which keeps the soil and the plants healthy and full of nutrients. The WWOOFer, who built the model pointed out that this model represented his most significant WWOOFing experience so far. From one of the hosts, he had learned about the food growing cycle and compost as a crucial element in it. Steffen commented that before becoming a WWOOFer he never thought about food and where it comes from; he just used to get it from the supermarket. However, his WWOOFing experience motivated him to learn more about the food cycle. In this model the clear, transparent window element represents his "enlightenment" about the food processes and compost lifecycle as one of the central elements in food production. Other participants told their stories of their 'ideal' WWOOFing experiences and how they had learnt to make new dishes, had tried a new food, or had prepared a dish special for their own culture.

In this research, during the interviews, many participants commented on communication as a challenging issue. In the next figure the left photo of an individual model was built by a farmer and the right model was built by a WWOOFer. Both models describe the challenges in terms of communication and mutual understanding. In the farmer's model, people look to opposite sides to represent the miscommunication. The owner of the model mentioned that when you are "on top of the tower" or "in your element", you tend not to hear what others say. In the model on the right a helmet was used as a strong metaphor signifying unwillingness of the farmer to look beyond own experience and try to hear the advice from WWOOFer.

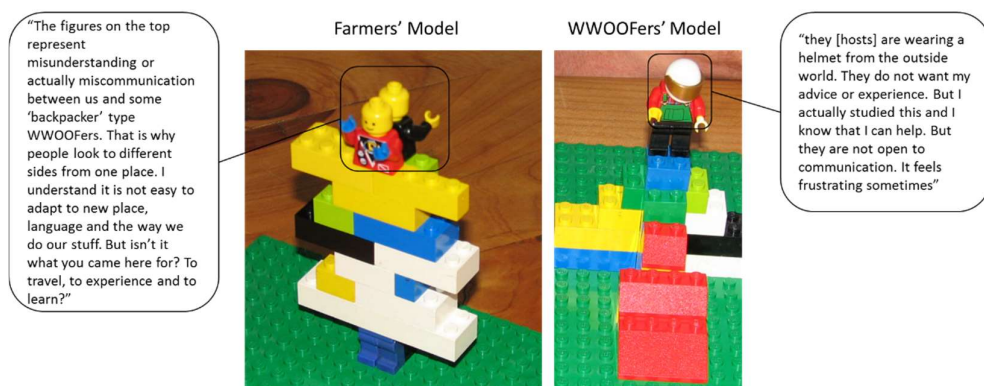


Figure 24. Communication Challenges Models.

During the LSP workshops, some participants told their stories about the difficulties with language and understanding a different culture. Other models

describing an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience included a 'window'. This simple window model (Figure 25) represented WWOOFing as a two-way exchange. Linley stressed that the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience represented a mutual benefit for its participants. She purposefully chose a figure which represented Frodo from the Lord of the rings film to describe the farmer. The second person was represented by a figure without hair or headwear to describe open mind of young travellers who come to New Zealand as WWOOFers.



Figure 25. Window as a Two-Way Exchange Model.

Participants underlined the importance of social interaction as a crucial component of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience and this certainly reinforced the theme of crossing and negotiating thresholds that emerged from the interview data. Mary created a model of her 'ideal' WWOOFing experience (Figure 26). She has used different elements to show the connection between people (for example, the rope connecting the heads). The people in this model are holding different 'flags' in the arms which mean that they come from different cultures.

She described it as follows:

An 'ideal' WWOOFing experience includes WWOOFers coming to be with us. They come to tell us about their world, but they also show interest in my world and sharing my produce from the garden. By this example, as a WWOOFer you see what

lifestyle you can have. And it is actually not that difficult.
(Mary, Farmer)

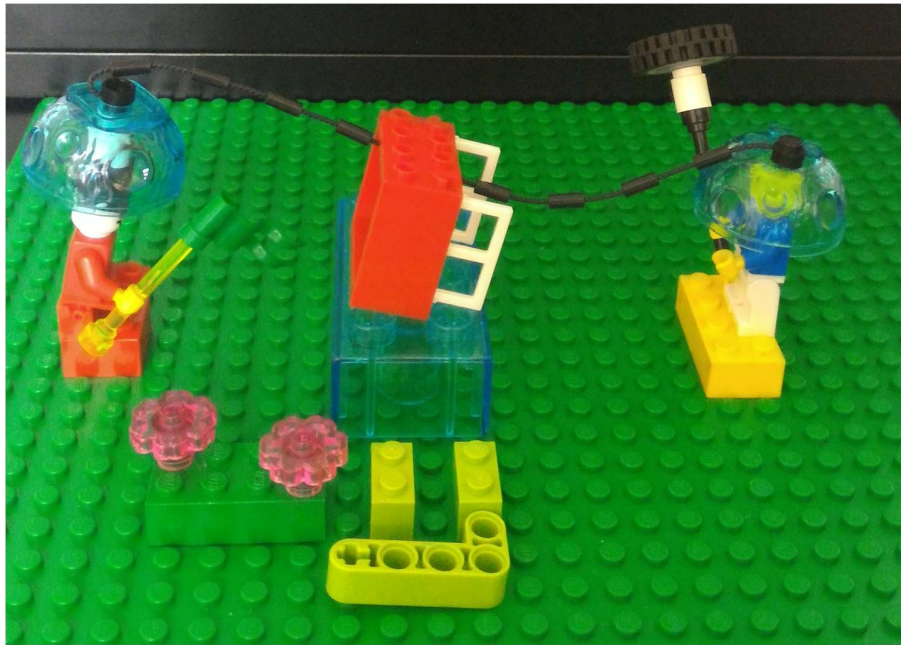
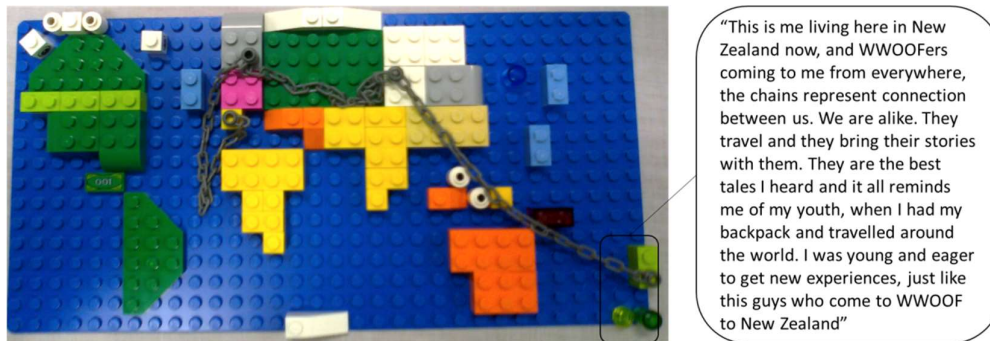


Figure 26. 'Ideal' WWOOFing Experience Model.

Another example of social interactions between farmers and WWOOFers was represented in interviews and in LSP workshops. One of the participants built a model about listening to the WWOOFers' travel stories (Figure 27).



"This is me living here in New Zealand now, and WWOOFers coming to me from everywhere, the chains represent connection between us. We are alike. They travel and they bring their stories with them. They are the best tales I heard and it all reminds me of my youth, when I had my backpack and travelled around the world. I was young and eager to get new experiences, just like this guys who come to WWOOF to New Zealand"

Figure 27. Positive WWOOFing Experience Model.

When younger, Charlotte had travel a lot, but she had now settled down and had a small lifestyle block. Describing her model of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience, she mentioned that she loved hosting WWOOFers saying: "I am not travelling a lot now, but I see your world through your experiences". She is fond of maps and in her house there is a map where her WWOOFers could write

where they are from or where did they travel before they came to New Zealand. Charlotte decided to replicate the world map and to connect New Zealand and Europe with 'chain element' as most of her WWOOFers are Europeans.

The last core element of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience mentioned by farmers and WWOOFers relates to sharing the rules. One of the often repeated rules I heard during my WWOOFing experience and during the LSP workshop was "leave the gates (doors) the way they were". Linley built a model (Figure 28) which represented the farm gate and used the metaphor about gates and doors to highlight the importance of the rules on the farm, again, aligned to the notion of the importance of crossing thresholds and sharing ideals.



Figure 28. Farm Gate Model.

From my first WWOOFing experience, I recall that while walking on the farm I was going around the property and closing the gates. This appeared natural to me, but later my host explained to me that on a farm you should leave the gate the way you found it. The reason for this is that the gates are sometimes open in order to ensure free movement of livestock from one paddock to another.

Overall, the three LSP workshops revealed that socially constructed New Zealand WWOOFing experience is about people sharing thresholds and boundaries in the relationship. An 'ideal' WWOOFing experience is possible when people share work, food, social time, and rules. Throughout the LSP

workshops, participants shared their stories of positive and negative WWOOFing experiences. At the end of each LSP workshop participants constructed a mutual story of the 'ideal' New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Each of the workshops followed the four steps of LSP method: question, built, share, reflect and applied two application techniques: 1) building individual models and stories and 2) building shared models and stories. The first step of the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience was related to the initial communication between farmer and a WWOOFer prior to arrival to a farm.

During the discussion phase of the LSP workshops participants agreed, that mutual interest in one's background, personality, culture, skills as well as interest in organics, gardening and farming contribute to the win-win exchange in WWOOFing. Both farmers and WWOOFers pointed out that to achieve an ideal WWOOFing experience, it is important to have an opportunity to 'get the hands dirty' by working outdoors with plants and animals. An integral part of an 'ideal' New Zealand WWOOFing experience is when farmers treat their volunteers fair and commit to working together or alongside with WWOOFers and WWOOFers show motivation to learn new skills and help on the farm. Two further components of 'ideal' WWOOFing experience were mentioned: 1) WWOOFers reported experiencing a sense of achievement when they were able to complete a small project on the farm, and 2) farmers often felt emotional feelings when they remembered what a particular WWOOFer contributed to or achieved on their property. For some WWOOF farmers the opportunity to share their philosophy, knowledge and skills, as well as to see the personal growth of a WWOOFer belong to satisfactory moments of WWOOFing experience. Apart from people sharing work and rules, farmers and WWOOFers pointed out that sharing social time, for example, exploring the region near the farm or cooking together and sharing healthy and nutritious food are core elements of an 'ideal' New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Both farmers and WWOOFers sought meaningful encounters, diverse social interaction and cultural exchange. These were the core elements of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience suggested by the WWOOFing participants during the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops.

Figures 26, 27, 28 represent examples of a shared model of an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience from the LSP workshops created for this research project. Several elements or separate individual models from these three final models of an ideal WWOOFing experience were discussed above. In the Workshop 1, participants tried not only to co-create their ideal WWOOFing experience but also to replicate the physical farm appearance as much as it was

possible. The grey and white elements at the top of the photo represented a farmers' house which was indeed grey and done from a corrugated metal. Farmers attempted to replicate the great view out of their house window. This view is represented by white and blue Duplo bricks on the right side of the foto. The hosts pointed out that they would like to share 'the view' with others. Farmers hoped that their WWOOFers will understand that having such an alternative lifestyle is not difficult. Anotehr core element of this model is represented by the flowers in the right corner of the photo. They do not only represent plants on the farm but also describe the creativity and energy of the WWOOFers which farmers enjoy to get inspired by.



Figure 29. An 'Ideal' WWOOFing Experience Model (Workshop 1).

Figure 30, describes the model produced during the second LSP workshop. The whole model is embraced by Mike's individual model and is represented by different coloured LEGO bricks, each of which represents a WWOOFer from a different culture. In the center of the model there is a farmer's family and WWOOFers. Similar to the Model from the Workshop 1, hosts mentioned that they enjoy creativity of their volunteers (yellow LEGO brick with red and green bricks on top of it). Like the first model, this model also mentions the importance of rules on the farm, which is represented by white gate in the moddle of the model. Finally, farmers suggeted to make this model in the round shape as they predominantly have positive WWOOFing experience with their volunteers and a circle represents a balance for them.

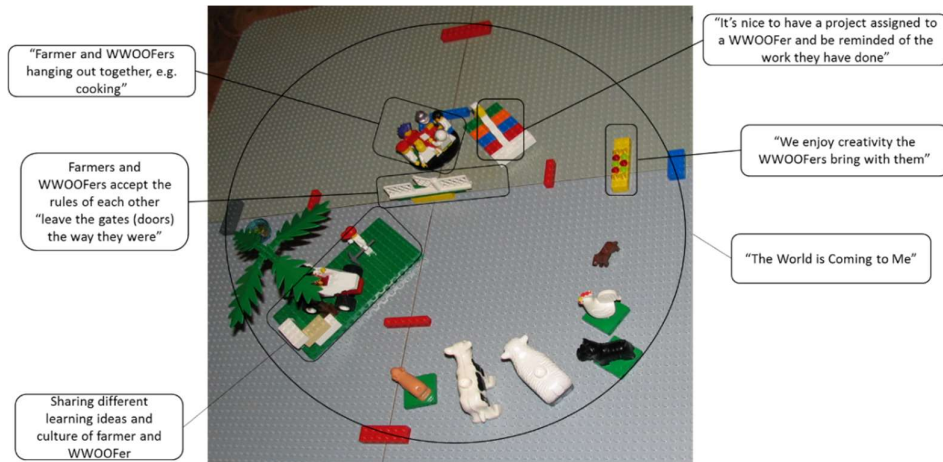


Figure 30. An 'Ideal' WWOOFing Experience Model (Workshop 2).

The third model of an ideal WWOOFing experience shares many similarities with previous two models. The model describes the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience as interaction based on working outdoors with plants (for example, flowerbed in the middle of the model). Participants also highlight importance of having social time together while sharing and learning about different cultures (for example, five minifigures cooking together at the right side of the photo). Another important component of the ideal WWOOFing experience is related to education and acquiring new skills (for example, minifigure pruning a tree at the bottom left of the photo).

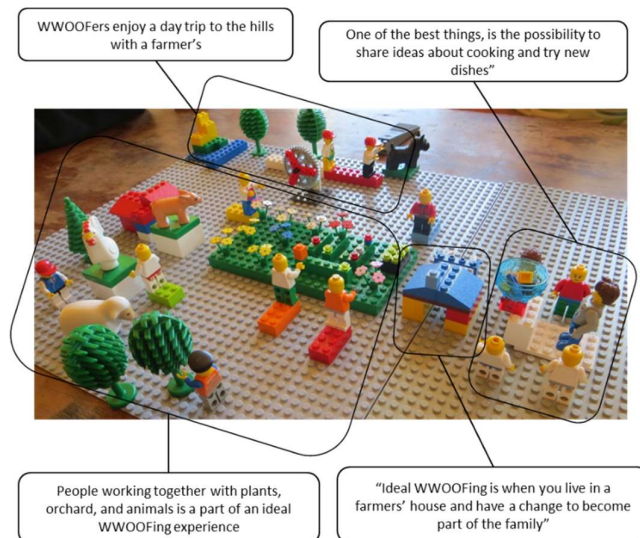


Figure 31. An 'Ideal' WWOOFing Experience Model (Workshop 3).

These three models captured individual experiences of the participants and revealed the multiple realities within WWOOF programme. The main advantage

of the LSP methodology is that the use of metaphors captured through the building of LEGO models and the facilitated workshop technique enabled co-construction of the ideal WWOOFing experience and provided nuanced insight into participants' stories. By moving the research process towards an innovative participatory process that gives the voice to participants, LSP promotes critical and reflective dialogue around the researched topic.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This thesis has sought to understand the complexity of human experience in the New Zealand WWOOF programme. This chapter followed key social constructionist principles, discussed in the Chapter Three. The collaborative nature of the research context creation allowed each participant, and the researcher, to have a 'voice'. In exploring the WWOOFing experience, I have been guided by constructionist epistemology and kept in mind that one facet of someone's experience intertwines with or contributes to other facets. The combination of qualitative methodologies chosen for this project allowed me to participate in the creation of the research context and be flexible. The three key themes, 'dirt', 'crossing thresholds', and 'ideals', emerged from conversation with the participants and through observation. This chapter also showed how participants construct an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience using metaphorical LSP models. The following figure, Figure 32, summarises the study's the key findings.

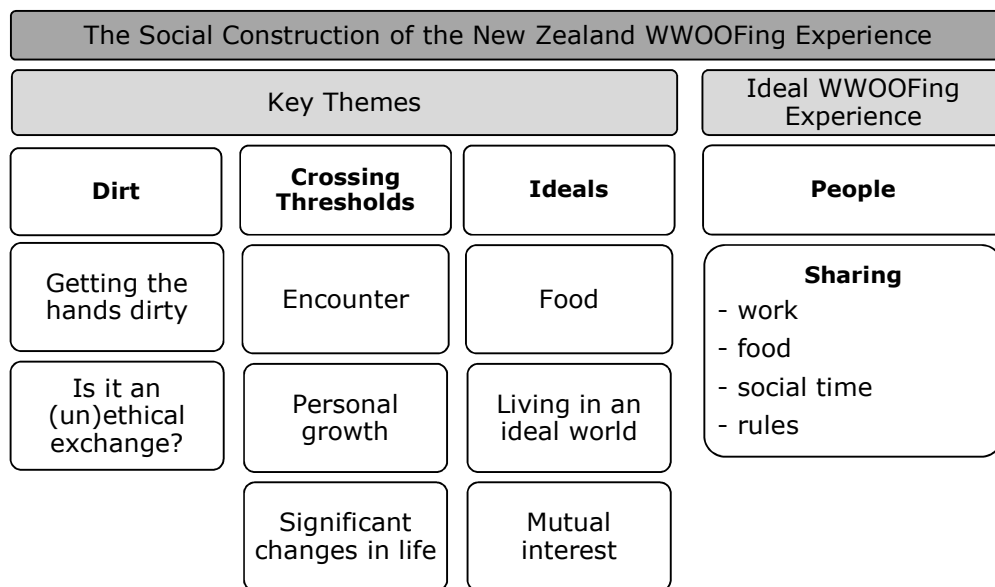


Figure 32. The Social Construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing Experience.

The key findings do not seek to represent one universal 'truth'; rather, they highlight the importance of the individual experiences and subjective meanings provided by the research participants. The following chapter, Chapter Five discusses the key themes derived from the data provided by the participants. Specifically, it discusses key considerations relevant to the thesis' objective and demonstrates how these research findings fit into scholarly knowledge.

Chapter Five: Discussion

In this study I investigated the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms, a form of a volunteer exchange programme. The aim of this thesis was to explore the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. The study also sought to understand an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience as constructed by farmers and WWOOFers. The core insights from my research were presented in the previous chapter under the three themes: 1) dirt, 2) crossing thresholds, and 3) ideals. The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops revealed how the WWOOF participants socially construct an 'ideal' New Zealand WWOOFing experience. The results of the workshops highlighted that the 'ideal' WWOOFing experience is about people sharing work, food, social time, and rules. However, these themes were not mutually exclusive; they overlapped and were interconnected. As a researcher who is guided by social constructionist ontology and epistemology, I took a holistic and integrated approach to exploring the human interactions among the study's participants and the social construction of their WWOOFing experiences. The presentation of the research findings was somewhat constrained by the requirement to present the work as written text. If I could choose, I would have preferred to share the results of the research in a more creative way, for example, through LSP methodology. Thus, in this chapter, I do my best to show how the core themes are interrelated and how they contribute to existing literature in tourism studies. First, I revisit the key points of the thesis regarding understanding the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience in order to fully appreciate the wider discussion and implications of the findings.

5.1 Revisiting the Key Findings

The research process, the literature review, the methodology, and the selection of its analytical techniques tools and of its use of creative LSP and Ketso methods were all explained in the previous chapters of this thesis. Next, I revisit the key findings to present the interconnection between them and the insights which emerged from this research as a whole. In this chapter, I aim to emphasise the interrelatedness of the themes and provide deeper insights into the understanding of the wider discussion on the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience and the implications of the findings.

In this section, I would like to return to the proem mentioned at the beginning of the thesis '*the soul lies in soil*'. This metaphorical phrase is central to the

understanding of the WWOOFing experience. The research findings highlight that the 'soul' of the WWOOFing experience lies in the 'soil'. In discussing the wider implications of the thesis findings, the WWOOFing experience can be discussed on three levels: the micro, meso, and macro (Figure 33).



Figure 33. The Levels of WWOOFing Experience.

As signified in the Chapter Three (section 3.11.), one way of looking at the significance of the social construction of a phenomenon is to look at micro, meso and macro levels of WWOOFing. These three levels are part of the social construction of WWOOFing experience as participants create and live through the experiences happening on three levels. Such as, they are interacting with each other, they participate in a volunteer tourism exchange programme and they are connected to overall WWOOF movement through their actions. The socially constructed nature of experiences in WWOOFing is a complex of values, philosophies, motives, and actions often occurring in setting shaped by public (for example family, school, community groups). In this chapter, I highlight the levels of interaction that are part of the social construction of the WWOOFing experience.

This research revealed that the WWOOFing experience is socially constructed between farmers interacting with WWOOFers (the micro level), who participate

in the volunteer farm tourism exchange programme (the meso level), which is part of a global movement (the macro level) aimed to promote cultural and educational experiences based on trust and non-monetary exchanges that help to build a sustainable global community. According to the participants of the LSP workshops, the central element of the WWOOFing experience is about people who share work, food, social time and rules. This experience lies on the micro level and metaphorically represents the roots of the programme. The interactions between WWOOFing participants are deep, meaningful and diversified like the roots of a plant which constantly grows. These roots of a plant intervene with each other and go deep into the soil to provide a unique form of inter-personal relations. Thus, the micro level represents and describes tacit encounters of the WWOOFing experience. Argued in Chapter One, the WWOOF programme provides an alternative volunteer tourism experience and is to some extent a part of the tourism sector. In the figure 33, a native New Zealand flax plant metaphorically represents the tourism sector and WWOOF organisational elements (meso level). The meso level of the WWOOFing experience is found in this thesis to be about encounters and crossing the thresholds of WWOOFing. On the global, macro level, the WWOOFing experience contributes to the organic movement and sustainable food production. Moreover, WWOOF movement promotes cultural and educational experiences which help to develop a sustainable global community. Hence, on the macro level WWOOFing offers a space for explicit knowledge exchange. This level describes interactions connected to the discourse of organic lifestyle.

Previous WWOOF studies have looked into the micro level of the WWOOFing experience, i.e., the interactions between farmers and WWOOFers and examined the motivations and experiences of WWOOFer farmers (Azizi & Mostafanezhad, 2014; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; Yamamoto & Engelsted, 2014) and WWOOF volunteers (Miller & Mair, 2015b; Nimmo, 2001). While scholars highlight that WWOOF farmers possess strong environmental values, they comment on the different degrees of interest of WWOOFers in organics, gardening, and farming. Nimmo's (2001) study found that volunteers were primarily motivated by the desire to meet and live with locals. My research findings echo such previous work and emphasise the high degree of interest among WWOOFers in outdoor work activities which allow 'getting the hands dirty'. The findings of this research highlight that one of the core components of the socially constructed WWOOFing experience is an encounter between farmers and WWOOFers and their different cultures. The findings provide

evidence that farmers and WWOOFers are motivated to participate in the programme in order to enrich their socially constructed experiences through interaction with each other.

For instance, in this research, farmers revealed that they are tied to the land and lack the opportunity to travel. On the one hand, the current study has shown that the WWOOFing experience provides farmers with the opportunity to 'travel through the WWOOFers stories' and allows them to enjoy the energy of young WWOOFers. The finding that the farmers have a limited ability to travel was also mentioned in previous research (Obojes, 2007). This finding was mainly manifested in the form of metaphorical LEGO models built by farmers during the LSP workshops. During the LSP workshops and the interviews, several farmers mentioned that 'the world is coming to me' when WWOOFers arrive at the farm. Specifically, farmers commented that they enjoy learning different cultures through personal interaction and hearing the stories about WWOOFers' home countries. Hence, developing intercultural relationships is an important component of WWOOFing experience for the participants. This finding also corresponds with the literature on commercial homes where hosts mentioned that they enjoy cultural diversity of their guests (Lynch et al., 2009).

On the other hand, one difference in the heart of the experience is the opportunity to encounter locals and experience an alternative lifestyle underpinned by 'green ideals', environmental consciousness, and interest in organic farming are core aspects of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience for WWOOF volunteers. In their research, McIntosh and Campbell (2001) reveal that, guided by strong environmental values, WWOOF farmers aim not only to offer their WWOOFers the opportunity to experience an alternative lifestyle, and to be educated about organic farming principles and sustainable living ideas but also the opportunity to stay with 'real' New Zealanders (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006).

Ideas of reciprocity have been widely debated in the volunteer tourism literature, and many scholars see volunteer tourism as a niche that fosters more reciprocal host-guests relationships (McGehee & Andereck, 2009; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Raymond & Hall, 2008; Wearing, 2001). However, some researchers, for example Mowforth and Munt (2009), critique volunteer tourism for its inability to achieve "equal relationships" (Sin, 2010, p. 991) between hosts and guests. However, in their study on organic farm volunteering, Miller and Mair (2015a) argue that tourism exchange programmes like WWOOF

provide space for in-depth interactions and sometimes offer the chance to create meaningful bonds and friendships between farmers and WWOOFers. The findings of the present thesis' provide new insights through its exploration of the social construction of the WWOOFing experience. The evidence presented by WWOOFing participants suggests that the WWOOFing experience can provide a win-win exchange, and hence more 'equal relationships' between farmers and WWOOFers, as long as farmers and WWOOFers have a mutual interest in each other. The value of this mutual interest was reflected in the experiences of farmers and volunteers reported through the fieldwork. Moreover, when talking about an 'ideal' WWOOFing, experience, participants mentioned two core elements: people and sharing. The results of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops highlight that in WWOOFing, the authentic experiences are ideally constructed and lived by people who are involved in sharing of food, work, social interaction, and rules.

Previous tourism literature provides ample evidence of tourists' desires to experience authentic, meaningful, individually tailored travel opportunities 'off the beaten track' and which incorporate diversity of landscapes and culturally enhanced encounters (Cohen, 1989; Engeset & Elvekrok, 2015; Mowforth & Munt, 2015; Yeoman, Brass, & McMahon-Beattie, 2007). The findings of this research reveal that the nature of the New Zealand WWOOF experience is potentially more intense, meaningful, and 'authentic' than other forms of alternative travel – for example, the backpacking experience under the New Zealand working holiday scheme – because of the meaningful reciprocal experiences and ideals and philosophies shared by farmers and WWOOFers. Indeed, a recent study by Deville and Wearing (2013) indicated that WWOOFing represents a form of transformational tourism which provokes deep questioning of the purpose and meaning of people's lives and ideals. Indeed the current study also provides evidence that the WWOOFing experience has an impact on the participants' lives. Joining the WWOOF programme helps participants to get transformational experiences and 'cross the threshold'. Here, the threshold represents a limit or boundary which, once crossed, 1) alters participants' life philosophy and 2) changes their ideals or 3) brings about significant changes in their lives. In this context, the present findings make a contribution to the literature by demonstrating the role of transformational experiences in revealing subjective meanings ascribed to the WWOOFing experience. The results indicate that the WWOOF programme offers meaningful experiences which potentially facilitate ontological change in participants. Thus, the research

findings distinguish the socially constructed WWOOFing experience from other types of alternative tourism experiences.

Previous research has also explored WWOOF as a tourism phenomenon (the meso level of the WWOOFing experience). From the greater perspective of tourists' experiences, the opportunity for personalised social contact between hosts and guests (Kastenholz & Sparrer, 2009; Trucker, 2003) and the possibility of experiencing the host's way of life, and a chance for a tourist to enter a more authentic 'spiritual centre' (Cohen, 1979), are highly valued components of the rural tourism experience. Rural tourism provides tourists with potentially deeper levels of involvement with hosts; for instance, tourists attempt to integrate into local community life through longer stays or frequent returning (Halfacree, 2012). Previous tourism studies have discussed the consequences of host-guest interactions widely and examined the hosts' attitudes towards tourism impacts in both commercial and a non-profit settings (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Hernandez, Cohen, & Garcia, 1996; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Lee & Back, 2003; Lyons & Wearing, 2008; Mansfeld & McIntosh, 2009; Reisinger, 2013; Waitt, 2003; Wearing, 2001). The fundamental assumption of such interactions is that social actors behave in a way that maximises the rewards and minimises the costs of their experience (Coulson, Maclaren, McKenzie, & O'Gorman, 2014; Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2017; Sharples, 2014). Hence, people engage in interactions by seeking value (material, social, or psychological), and as long as the pattern of exchange is perceived as balanced by both parties, the participants continue to engage in this exchange relationship (Madrigal, 1993).

Despite many of the benefits of host-guests relationships in WWOOFing mentioned in previous studies (Deville, 2011; Hallmann & Zehrer, 2016; Kosnik, 2014; Lans, 2016; McIntosh, 2009; Mostafanezhad et al., 2014; Mostafanezhad et al., 2015; Ord, 2010; Terry, 2014), a certain degree of imbalance in the WWOOFing experience is evident. For example, evidence was found to show that WWOOF farmers bear the noneconomic costs of WWOOFing such as lack of privacy and 'emotional labour' involved in hosting WWOOFers (Mostafanezhad et al., 2014). Additionally, as demonstrated by McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006), farmers feel that WWOOFers treat their farm as a backpackers' hostel and, therefore, do not "have the right spirit" (p. 95). On one side, Kosnik's (2013) research reports that manipulation and exploitation are potential risks of total immersion into the farmers' reality. On the other, volunteers' exploit farmers' hospitality when volunteers stay longer than they

are welcome. Although these rare extremes are possible in the WWOOFing experience (Kosnik, 2013), the current thesis moved beyond this 'motivations misbalance' (McIntosh, 2009) and in so doing drew attention to the issue of a lack of ethical accountability within the socially constructed WWOOFing experience.

Although the results of this study are broadly consistent with those of previous research related to motivations and host-guest relationships in volunteer tourism programmes (Benson, 2011a; Lyons & Wearing, 2008; Reisinger, 2013, 2015; Wearing, 2001), this study for the first time touches on a lack of 'perceived' ethical accountability within WWOOFing. Cherry and Jacob (2017) define accountability as "an ethical duty stating that one should be answerable legally, morally, ethically, or socially for one's activities" (p. 162). Previous tourism research suggests that the nature of ethical values and volunteers' motivations in volunteer tourism is bi-polar and relates to altruism and egoism (Clary et al., 1996; Nyland, 2001). In this research, the notion of ethical accountability is anchored in the meso level of the WWOOFing experience and is embedded in the underlying values of WWOOF as an exchange programme. When farmers and WWOOFers join the WWOOF movement, they are subscribing to a known set of values and philosophies, despite whether or not they are primarily motivated by them. As stated in Chapter One, the Federation of WWOOF Organisations highlights that the WWOOFing experience is based on mutual respect and trust, and the findings of this thesis reveal that this socially constructed exchange can only work in that manner. In fact, fairness is a fundamental principle of the win-win exchange in WWOOFing, where:

The host asks for maturity, respect, loyalty, commitment and some ability in this exchange. A willingness to communicate honestly is essential. The WWOOFer expects nourishing food, clean accommodation, reasonable work hours and tasks and an integration into the family and its surroundings (WWOOF International, 2012).

This quote highlights the ideals of the organisation in the social construction of the WWOOFing experience. In a positive case, when the expectations of farmers and WWOOFers are met, the WWOOFing experience has the potential to be a win-win exchange for both participants. However, the findings of this research confirm that this is not always the case. Throughout the interviews, participants talked openly about their negative WWOOFing experiences. For example, farmers commented that some WWOOFers are disengaged and are not interested in organic farming or the host's way of life. In turn, WWOOFers

commented that on some WWOOF farms they work more hours than initially agreed to in a conversation with a farmer or that they are required to work more than the four to six hours a day suggested on the WWOOF New Zealand website.

Hence, the importance of communication of expectations is evident. Derived from the observation process in this research it could be suggested that much of this miscommunication stems from the incomplete host profile listed in the WWOOF directory and on the WWOOF New Zealand website. However, in 2015 WWOOF New Zealand introduced a new website where farmers have an option to provide better and more detailed descriptions of their properties. Additionally, farmers can describe the regular tasks available at the property, skills they offer to teach, and skills they are keen to learn, as shown in Figure 34 below. Hence, the new website could help to minimise the misunderstandings between farmers and WWOOFers.

SKILLS			
Carpentry/Building	Propagation	Pruning	Fencing
Mechanical	Conservation	Gardening	DIY/Maintenance
Engineering	Water Care	Animal Care	Landscaping
Equestrian	Dairy	Agriculture	Bee Keeping

Legend: unfiltered wants to learn can offer

Figure 34. Extract from a WWOOF Farm Profile.

Source: From www.woof.co.nz.

Furthermore, the lack of a formal structure for WWOOFing relationships, for example, a contract between the farmer (in this case employer) and a WWOOFer (in this case employee), such as that used in the case of Au Pair (Cox & Narula, 2003; Isaksen, 2010; Williams & Baláž, 2004), could lead to misunderstanding between the participants who socially construct this experience. However, as the founder of WWOOF Sue Coppard noted such 'business' formalities were not embraced by the original spirit of WWOOFing where the relationships were based on mutual trust and respect (Pier, 2011). Furthermore, WWOOFing exchange is voluntary, and WWOOFers are free to

leave at any time; farmers also reserve the right to turn a WWOOFer away. Thus, a win-win exchange in WWOOFing is based on mutual respect, trust, and interest in each other. In spite of the above mentioned misunderstandings, WWOOFers reported that if they work together or alongside their WWOOF hosts outside initially agreed hours or tasks, they do not consider this experience as exploitation but rather as a learning opportunity. However, some participants reported in their interview about the 'exploitation' of WWOOFers in commercial businesses across New Zealand which they are aware of.

In fact, the purposeful use of volunteers' labour under the umbrella of 'WWOOFing' on commercial farms and tourism businesses has also been documented in New Zealand (Cropp, 2016b). One of the consequences of a lack of ethical accountability related to the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is thus the exploitation of volunteers' labour. Many businesses in tourism and the farming industry advertise volunteer placements and refer to WWOOFing when they mean any arrangement where work is performed for accommodation and/or food. Cropp (2016a) claims that illegal 'volunteer' labour practice in New Zealand is 'blatant and endemic'. Since late 2016, the New Zealand Labour Inspectorate has been investigating the illegal use of volunteer labour in several New Zealand businesses (Cropp, 2016a). The authorities point out that if volunteers are expected to work regular hours and receive the value of any payment, for example, accommodation, free Wi-Fi or food, then it is not volunteering and this experience is equivalent to employment (Employment New Zealand, 2017). Hence, the idea of an exchange of 'labour for food and accommodation' that is used in WWOOFing provides fertile ground for exploitation of volunteers' labour and tarnishes the image of the WWOOF programme, as its name is used to attract workers to those businesses. Hence, this contradicts with trust, which is one of the founding values of the WWOOF movement. FoWO states that the WWOOF movement is aimed to promote cultural and educational experiences based on trust and non-monetary exchanges that help to build a sustainable global community (Federation of WWOOF Organisations, 2016).

Globally, (on the macro level) the New Zealand WWOOFing experience represents the second oldest and second largest national network within the WWOOF movement (International WWOOF Association, 2013). The findings of this thesis highlight that the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is a popular travel scheme among young 'new middle class' populations from prosperous backgrounds (Munt, 1994). The 'new middle class' experiences tourism as a

key commodity or, as Bourdieu (2010) argues, a cultural good where primary experiences and symbols are consumed (Lash, 2014). Munt (1994) argues that the 'new middle class' tourists are particularly interested in less formalised forms of tourism which involve longer sojourns overseas. The World Wide Opportunities on Organic farms programme is one example of a less formal tourism activity that allows for longer stays and more authentic experiences (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2001; McIntosh, 2009). Although the WWOOFing experience is generally claimed to be inclusive (Barrett, 2004), this research underlines the reality that the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is affordable mainly for the 'new middle class' tourists. This situation can also be explained by the limitations imposed by the country's immigration regulations and the remote geographical location of New Zealand. New Zealand Immigration limits the visa which allows volunteering under the WWOOF scheme to 43 countries (most of which are industrialised prosperous western countries) and this visa type is open to the 18-30 age group. Additionally, the WWOOFing experience is constrained by the financial ability of the tourist. A further limitation to participate in WWOOFing is time available to travel. Many WWOOFers in this research decided to travel as volunteers as they were on the threshold of finishing high school, starting or leaving university or had the time because of changes in career. Thus, I argue that the New Zealand WWOOFing experience does not represent an inclusive and affordable volunteer travel scheme as immigration law, the geographical distance and thus, the financial means limit the participation in WWOOF programme to a 'privileged' group of people.

Previous research highlighted the educational power of the WWOOF movement (Álvarez, 2013; Choo & Jamal, 2009; Malec, 2014). However, while most previous studies emphasised the learning opportunities and educational benefits for WWOOF volunteers, they rarely presented evidence of educational benefits for WWOOF farmers. Choo and Jamal (2009) state that WWOOF facilitates learning experiences connected to organics, farming, and alternative lifestyles. Álvarez (2013) underlines that WWOOFing disseminates knowledge about the organic lifestyle through practical hands-on experiences on organic farms (Longo, Shankar, & Nuttall, 2017). Furthermore, a recent study by Malec (2014) suggests that the WWOOFing experience facilitates not only learning about the 'environmental aspects' but also impacts the individual's psychology and thus facilitates psychological transformation. As indicated in Chapter Four, this research provides an evidence that the New Zealand WWOOFing experience

has reciprocal nature and WWOOFers along with farmers profit from the educational component of WWOOFing.

The thesis findings presented in Chapter Four have revealed the unique motivations of volunteers to participate in WWOOFing. The thesis found that the WWOOFers are motivated to volunteer on New Zealand WWOOF farms as they enjoy getting their hands dirty and learn about organic farming principles and sustainable life ideals. A core interest of volunteers is the opportunity to get involved in 'dirty' farming activities. The other important element of the WWOOFing experience highlighted by WWOOFers is their interest in the educational component of WWOOFing. The present study's findings echo the education benefits for WWOOFers and portray stories of WWOOFers related to personal growth or significant life changes. For example, some WWOOFers shared stories about how their WWOOFing experience had led to an alteration of their career path; farmers, too, reported how they improved or learned new skills through the WWOOFing experience. Three participants in this research used WWOOFing to enhance their career and get experience in alternative and organic farming practices to achieve their professional aspirations.

Unexpectedly, farmers commented on the learning opportunities as an important part of their WWOOFing experience. Some farmers commented on the fact that WWOOF provides space for personal growth in terms of mastering time management skills and improvement of personal communication skills. For example, Rachel, a former WWOOFer and now a co-host, mentioned a growth of self-confidence and self-esteem as well as an improvement of her communication skills as she became more experienced as a WWOOF host. Other farmers reported cases where they had benefitted from a WWOOFer's knowledge. The learning examples mentioned by farmers in this study include the contribution their WWOOFers made in terms of knowledge in landscape architecture, permaculture, carpentry skills, design, and IT. Although this educational component emerged as a core part of WWOOFing experiences, previous research has not gone deep enough in terms of uncovering the learning opportunities for WWOOF farmers. Specifically, the current study found that the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is more reciprocal in terms of learning opportunities for both hosts and volunteers than earlier reported.

Farmers and WWOOFers participated in this research highlighted the significance of the educational component as an important element of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience. Although, usually farmers play a role of

teacher, who “preach[es] an alternative lifestyle by example,” (Mary, Farmer), in some cases reported by the participants WWOOFers played a role of expert and educated their farmers. Hence, some evidence was found to suggest that the New Zealand WWOOFing experience aligns with the educational value of WWOOF movement and facilitates the reciprocal educational experiences based on trust and non-monetary exchange. In a recent WWOOF study focusing on educational aspects of WWOOF volunteers, Malec (2014) highlights that the educational experiences of WWOOFers are transformational. As such, an educational component of the WWOOFing experience has an influence on participants’ values, pro-environmental attitudes, and behaviour.

The educational experiences in WWOOFing might be connected to an alteration of the participant’s life style, change in worldviews and philosophies. Thus, the WWOOF programme potentially offers transformational experiences (Deville, 2015; Deville & Wearing, 2013). The evidence provided by the participants in this research shows that these transformational experiences could be caused by critical incidents in WWOOFing. Chapter Four illustrates several stories that potentially could be described as critical incidents that led to a change in participants’ life. For example, John’s encounter with stranded traveller provided him with the opportunity to experience the benefits of hosting WWOOFers and thus, empowered him to join WWOOF as a host. Rachel’s story illustrates a critical incident of a meaningful encounter in which she fell in love with her WWOOF host and as an outcome, she transformed from being a WWOOFer to being a co-host. Two other stories, presented by Eva and Eric, relate to the critical incidents linked to the educational experiences in WWOOFing. Their experiences led to the significant alteration and transformation of their worldviews, change of occupation and life directions.

Scholars define a critical incident from the point of view of their discipline, for example in health and medical studies a critical incident is “an event out of the range of normal experience – one which is sudden and unexpected, makes you lose control, involves the perception of a threat to life and can include elements of physical or emotional loss” (Casalis, 2006, p. 9). Although a critical incident refers to an outstanding event which impacts a person’s life, it is not necessarily a dramatic or negative event (Moore, 2017).

In social work, for example, scholars define a critical incident as “an observable human activity, complete enough to permit conclusions and predictions to be made about the person performing the act” (Fook, Ryan, & Hawkins, 2000, p.

226). In particular, Stepney (2006) highlights that a critical incident encourages a person to "stop and think" (p. 1302), which supports the statement that critical incidents prompt reflection and mark a turning point in a person's thinking (Fook et al., 2000). Specifically, a critical incident could represent a thought-provoking experience influencing a person and usually represents an event that is 'charged emotionally' (Tripp, 2011). Critical incidents may challenge a person's beliefs, values, attitudes or behaviours and may increase awareness or challenge understanding of social justice issues or may involve conflict, hostility, aggression or criticism (Fook & Cooper, 2003).

While the above mentioned studies describe critical incidents in healthcare and social work, few tourism studies have focused on critical incidents as part of tourists' experiences highlighting the importance of the events which led to the incident (Jackson, White, & Schmierer, 1994; Jackson, White, & Schmierer, 1996; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; Pritchard & Havitz, 2006). Some tourism scholars used a critical incident technique in relation to service quality and tourists satisfaction (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Callan, 1998; Petrick, Tonner, & Quinn, 2006; Swanson & Hsu, 2009).

The findings of this research indicate that the teaching-learning thresholds of WWOOFing and an encounter threshold could be seen as critical incidents which in some way significantly impact participants personal and/or professional life and may potentially offer transformational experiences. As such, for participants in this research, the experience of critical incidents in WWOOFing can serve as a meaningful life changing opportunity that they might aspire to but never quite reach in other types of travel. In this sense, there is a need to further explore the critical incidents in host-guest exchanges.

Another distinguishing feature of the WWOOF movement evident in this research is the contribution it makes to achieving a sustainable lifestyle through practical learning and experiencing an alternative lifestyle. This finding echoes the outcome of the recent study which found that transformative learning on organic farms can help to foster a more sustainable society (Kerton & Sinclair, 2010). Kosnik (2013) conducted a comprehensive study on the international WWOOF movement. Her research investigated the nature of hospitality in the work exchange relationship by analysing how participants negotiate their social and economic relationships through food and reciprocity (Kosnik, 2014). Arguably, the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is transformational (Deville, 2015; Deville & Wearing, 2013) and supports local organic food production as

well as facilitates learning, although this requires further examination to confirm the findings reported here. A further aspect of the WWOOFing experience highlighted by the participants is the importance of sharing social time and in particular meals as an 'ideal' element of the WWOOFing experience. Participants underlined the significance of the food rituals, for example cooking a dish together or eating a shared dinner, as an important element of social bonding that adds a personal meaning to the New Zealand WWOOFing experience.

5.2 Summary

In this chapter, the key elements of the socially constructed New Zealand WWOOFing experiences were presented and discussed as unique to the thesis research. These elements are related to 'dirt' of WWOOFing experience, WWOOFing as an opportunity to cross thresholds and role of ideals in WWOOFing experience. Indeed, each of elements provides a novel lens for the conceptualisation of the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experience in a wider sense. Therefore, the WWOOFing experience is a unique and alternative form of volunteer tourism experience, focused on the non-profit nature of this relationship-centred experience which is based on trust. Additionally, it is proposed that critical incidents in this tourism experience facilitate educational and cultural encounters and supports global organic movement. The next final chapter will conclude this thesis research in discussing the key points that the thesis has found and provide final thoughts on the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experience.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

In this last chapter, I seek to provide the final thoughts about this research project and to conclude the thesis. In particular, here I aim to make sense of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience, by drawing together the main findings and their significance as discussed previously. This thesis has been guided by the constructionist worldviews. Scholars associated with the Chicago School of Sociology contributed to the development of a social constructionist worldview in the 1960s. Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Schutz (1967) pioneered the idea that social objects are not found in the world but are rather created, negotiated, and shaped by people through their social interaction and practices. Likewise, people are agents who actively construct their world; thus, they socially construct their experiences. Of note, a growing number of tourism researchers have drawn on and advanced the theory of social constructionism as it relates to the understanding of the tourism experiences of human beings (Hunter, 2016; Iwashita, 2003; Low, 2000; Theocharous, Zopiatis, & Philaretou, 2015).

Throughout the whole process of this research, I attempted to explore the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience as an insider. I aimed to understand the meanings of participants' stories and to explore how participants construct and experience WWOOFing. Finally, this research thesis aimed to provide a theoretical and methodological platform for further investigation into the WWOOF phenomenon. In adherence to the social constructionism principles underpinning this research, the thesis provides an original and informative contribution to tourism scholarship. Indeed, the thesis offers a creative and innovative approach to construct tourism realities through LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology (Wengel et al., 2016). Additionally, this thesis proposes Ketso method as a useful creative tool of qualitative data analysis.

This chapter starts by recapping the core findings of the thesis to make sense of how the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is socially constructed by WWOOFing participants. This final chapter is about highlighting the key experiences shared by farmers and WWOOFers. It then proceeds with discussion of the contributions to the existing tourism literature, methodological knowledge and further implications that the thesis makes. Finally, recommendations for further research are suggested and personal reflections on the research project are illustrated.

This thesis has explored the WWOOFing phenomenon as a volunteer farm tourism exchange programme. It can be argued that much tourism research to date has neglected to delve deeper subjective meanings of the WWOOFing experience shared by WWOOFing participants. This thesis has sought to open a dialogue concerning the underlying distinct values and unique philosophy underpinning the WWOOF movement. Specifically, I sought to understand how the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is socially constructed. This research was important as it also explored how an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience is constructed by farmers and WWOOFers.

It has achieved this through a blend of creative and innovative methodological tools. The thesis found that the WWOOFing experience was complex and multifaceted. I revealed the interactions of farmers and WWOOFers on three levels: micro, meso and macro. Overall, the thesis findings suggested that WWOOFing participants join the WWOOF movement motivated by sociocultural and educational motives. This thesis found that, for farmers, WWOOF offers an opportunity to diversify their social life and engage in meaningful intercultural exchange with international travellers. Farmers enjoy hosting WWOOFers, sharing with them New Zealand culture and an alternative way of life as well as educating WWOOFers. WWOOF volunteers view this programme as a way of meaningful travel the off-beaten track which allows educational experiences and encounters with locals in a non-profit setting. WWOOFers love to learn new skills and work outdoors by 'getting their hands dirty'. On the other side, the findings show another 'dirty' side of WWOOFing experience and illustrate examples of the lack of the ethical accountability in this type of tourism exchange. The symbolic meaning of 'dirt' represents the nature of the experience which is perceived by the participants as imbalanced, unethical or even turns to become an exploited relationship. The findings confirmed that participants face this negative WWOOFing experience when their values, motivations and philosophies are not matched.

Another key element of the WWOOFing experience is the opportunity to live through critical incidents in the host-guest exchange and across the thresholds. Participants' specifically talked about three thresholds in a context of WWOOFing, for instance, a threshold of encounter. Participants in this thesis expressed their perception that the WWOOFing could be a win-win encounter if farmers and WWOOFers have a mutual interest. Specifically, participants see their WWOOFing experience as an ideal experience when people have a chance to share work, social interactions, food and rules. Food rituals represent an

important aspect of social bonding between farmers and WWOOFers add one dimension that can usefully be further explored in future research. The second threshold mentioned by farmers and WWOOFers sees the WWOOFing experience as a point of departure or transition to something new. These experiences are often triggered by so-called critical incidents which are not necessarily negative events but potentially provide participants with lived experiences that challenge individual's beliefs, values, attitudes or behaviours and encourage a person to 'stop and think'. In a sense, the WWOOFing experience often facilitates personal growth. For example, while working together on the farm participants are involved into knowledge exchange related to organics, gardening and farming as well as about their cultures. As such, working together often facilitates learning opportunities and provides room for personal growth. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that the WWOOFing experience led to significant life changing events for some participants.

The final key theme of the socially constructed WWOOFing experience emerging from the findings relates to the ideals. This thesis presents an evidence that the WWOOFing experience provides its participants with the opportunity to focus on individual ideals related to food and nutrition and specific alternative lifestyles. A key argument made here is that the opportunity to have an 'ideal' WWOOFing experience depends on the degree of participants' interest in each other. Specifically, this thesis has argued that if farmers and WWOOFers actively engage on a social level, it is more likely that they could have more balanced and harmonious relationships with each other, and thus, have a positive WWOOFing experience.

This study argues that the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is potentially neither inclusive or affordable for wider tourist populations as this experience is constrained by limitations. For example, the New Zealand WWOOFing experience is limited by the New Zealand Immigration laws and the opportunities of the tourists including financial ability and time available to travel. Thus, the WWOOFing experience is a volunteer exchange programme for privileged populations. The findings of this research revealed a lack of ethical accountability within WWOOFing. WWOOFing experience becomes a mismatch when participants pursue personal hidden agendas which contradict and go against the underlying values and philosophies of WWOOF movement.

In light of the findings and final thoughts reported here, it can be argued that the WWOOFing experience can be seen as an alternative form of travel, one which is voluntary, non-profit, relationship-centred, hence based on trust. Moreover, WWOOFing facilitates educational and cultural experiences and supports the global organic movement. This thesis also suggests that the benefits of WWOOFing experience were not confined to the actual duration of the WWOOFing experience in New Zealand itself. Indeed, the WWOOFing has a positive impact on WWOOF farmers providing them with the possibility to live by their ideals and benefit from the social interactions with travelers. Furthermore, in some cases WWOOFing has a power to serve as a transformational tourism experience, which leads to the significant changes in life or alteration of the participants' life philosophy and ideals. Conversely however, whilst it is a relationship based on trust, this thesis revealed that ethical balance and mutual cooperation are paramount to the sustainability of the WWOOFing exchange experience.

Theoretical implications

Tourism is a complex, constantly changing activity which results partly from personal, internal motivations and partly from external social, economic and cultural aspects which influence people and their experiences. A variety of theories and theoretical approaches have been applied in tourism research which provide room to interpret and understand multifaceted tourism phenomena. In particular, in this research project, I approach an investigation of the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farm's phenomenon from a social constructionist perspective to understand and explore the social construction of the New Zealand WWOOFing experience as a volunteer farm tourism exchange programme. In this research, I eschew the generalisations and a single truth approach and instead focus on construction, subjective experiences, and ideals within the WWOOF programme.

This constructionist nature of the thesis makes a contribution to understanding what it actually means for participants to be part of WWOOF movement and to be involved in WWOOFing in New Zealand. As a result, the thesis offers meaningful and valuable theoretical contributions to the existing tourism literature on WWOOFing phenomenon. Precisely, the contributions are concerned with ways of conceptualising the tourist experience by providing new perspectives with respect to the notion of inclusiveness and affordability of the WWOOFing experience and ethical accountability in WWOOFing.

Specifically, the thesis has shed the light on the limitations connected to the inclusiveness and affordability of the WWOOFing experience. The findings provide the evidence that WWOOF programme is primarily affordable for 'new middle class' tourist populations from prosperous backgrounds. In this sense, it could be argued that inclusiveness and affordability are important aspects of volunteer tourism programmes. With increasing popularity of gap-year programmes and volunteerism opportunities, researchers have discussed who could afford participating in volunteer tourism programmes (Butcher & Smith, 2010; Devereux, 2008; Heath, 2007; Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011). However, little research has explored the inclusiveness and affordability of non-commercial volunteer tourism programmes and the implications of this for the social construction of the experience. Additionally, this thesis opens a discussion on the ethical accountability of volunteer tourism exchange programmes. This aspect should be potentially considered in future tourism studies, particularly investigating the experiences of two parties, for example experiences between hosts and guests. Additionally, the findings highlight a need for further exploration of the critical incidents in host-guest tourism exchange. The study of critical incidents in host-guest tourism exchange could provide meaningful insights into participants' lived experiences and how those experiences affected hosts or tourist after their encounter.

Overall, this thesis addresses unique and alternative aspects of the tourist experience in the context of volunteer farm tourism that people may not encounter in other types of tourism programmes. These contributions were made possible through a social constructionist framework, which encouraged every research participant to express their voice, describe their subjective lived experiences and share their personal WWOOFing stories. The next section describes the LSP and Ketso as creative and innovative qualitative research methods in contributing to an exploration of the WWOOFing experience.

Methodological implications

This thesis makes a valuable contribution to tourism research by introducing creative and innovative methodological tools, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® and Ketso. In this research project, I aimed to understand dynamic and complex social interactions in the WWOOF programme. I attempted to conduct the inductive research with a goal of giving the research participants a voice to present their stories of the subjective WWOOFing experience. As such, a social

constructionist framework allowed me to uncover meanings which participants create in their reality based on their subjective, individual worldview and their shared exchange experience (Small, 2008). As traditional qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups and observation) and alternative creative and visual methods (photography, drawing, self-portrait, collage, digital and graphic elicitation) are criticised for inadequate capture of the construction of realities (Liamputtong, 2007), I decided to go beyond and apply an alternative holistic method, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® which aligns with the constructionist ontology and epistemology of this thesis.

LSP was designed for a business sector as a facilitated workshop technique aimed to improve communication, teambuilding and contribute to problem solving (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014). Drawing on the work of Gauntlett (2007), who pioneered the LSP in research and applied this methodology to explore identities, the methodology rests on four pillars: use of metaphors, underpinned by the concept of play (Gee, 2007; Kane, 2004; Rieber, 1996; Terr, 2000), the theory of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) and constructivism (Papert & Harel, 1991; Piaget, 1955). My study has proven that LSP effectively applies these concepts to facilitate learning through exploration and metaphorical explanations of tourism realities. This research has established the LSP methodology in tourism studies (Wengel et al., 2016).

This research thesis highlights LSP as an effective method in revealing the social interactions between farmers and WWOOFers on organic farms in New Zealand. A core benefit of LSP is that the use of metaphors captured through the building of LEGO models reveals multiple realities of the phenomenon and gives nuanced insight into participants' experiences. In this research LSP has proven itself as an effective methodology for exploring the depth of socially constructed realities that are complex, dynamic and therefore demand a multidimensional approach. For a qualitative researcher LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology has a potential to move research process towards an innovative participatory methodology that embeds the participants voices in the co-created data and promotes critical, reflective dialogue around the research phenomenon. However, as mentioned in the section 3.4.4. LSP has its limitations, such as the level of experience of the facilitator, space and time for the workshop along with sufficient amount of LEGO bricks, and thus may not be suitable for every research context.

Another creative and innovative tool used in this research is Ketso. Ketso is facilitated workshop technique which empowers people to think and work together in a productive way (Tippett, 2013; Tippett & How, 2011). Ketso technique was used to run stakeholder workshops and training (Ketso, 2010), to engage in action research and develop questions with stakeholders (Tippett et al., 2009), and for gathering data (Cowen, Stella, Magahy, Strauss, & Morton, 2011). McIntosh and Cockburn-Wootten (2016) propose Ketso as “a qualitative method that offers a new and creative way for tourism researchers to become facilitators in co-creating insightful outcomes with tourism stakeholders” (p. 148).

In this thesis research, I applied Ketso methodology as a complementary analysis tool. The key advantage of the use of Ketso further definition of emerging themes and deeper clarification cross the data. Ketso methodology allowed me to fill the limitations of thematic analysis and enable my focus on deeper connections between the codes and emerging themes by following the logical path outlined in the Ketso methodology. Thus, this thesis proposes Ketso method as a useful creative and participative tool for data analysis in studies endeavouring to understand complex social realities of research participants. By applying Ketso in the data analysis, I reached deeper understanding of themes and detected previously neglected connections in my data. Similarly to the LSP methodology, Ketso is limiting in terms of the Ketso kit availability, skilled facilitator, the space and time for the Ketso session. Being experienced in Ketso method facilitation, I did not struggle with inductive nature of the method as outlined by McIntosh and Cockburn-Wootten (2016) but I found it difficult to facilitate a one-on-one session for myself as my reflexive thoughts intervened the process. To improve the use of the Ketso method I suggest using Ketso with a supervisory team and recommend further scientific inquiry into the effectiveness of Ketso as complementary data analysis tool. However, despite the limitation of the method, Ketso allowed me to prioritise key emerging themes and draw the conclusions.

Suggestions for future research

While this research has provided insights into exploring the social construction of New Zealand WWOOFing experiences, and understanding an ‘ideal’ WWOOFing experience, there is room to build on initial conclusions made in this thesis. Although WWOOFing is a popular global phenomenon it is largely neglected by academics and not much is known about it. Based on previous

WWOOFing research, this thesis attempted to 'map the terrain' so that the future studies could 'build various buildings' considering the thesis findings.

To advance tourism scholarship, researchers could seek to explore WWOOF in relation to this thesis research but aim under different circumstances, for example investigate the WWOOFing experiences in different countries as the origin, culture and income level of participants could potentially provide other meanings of the social construction of the WWOOFing experience. As it was mentioned in earlier in the thesis, a gender perspective of WWOOFing experience might be an insightful area for future research. Furthermore, the issue of the ethical accountability in volunteer tourism could be explored further. Specifically, looking into ethical accountability and the consequences of the critical incidents lived by participants when investigating tourism experiences between hosts and guests in other tourism exchange programmes.

Additionally, this thesis proposes creative innovative methodologies which could be used in future tourism studies. LSP has proven itself as a useful complementary methodology in relation to experiences in tourism programmes. Potentially LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology could be applied in other qualitative studies which aim to embed the participants' voices and promote critical, reflective dialogue around the research phenomenon. In relation to Ketso methodology as a complementary tool of data analysis, other studies could benefit from this method when looking for emerging themes and deeper clarification cross large amounts of qualitative data. In this research Ketso has proven to be a useful method which helped to focus on and narrow the outstanding themes.

Final personal reflections on the research project

A lot has happened during the four and half years of my doctoral journey. Towards the end of my PhD, I come to realise that this research was as much about me as it was about the experiences of my participants. Ethics and reflexivity were important parts of this research process. I believe that it is critical to consider the responsibility to the participants. Although I wish them to be part of the research process as much as possible, the responsibility for the critical analysis rests with me, as a researcher. I have chosen the pseudonym names for my participants, I chose the quotes to illustrate and reflect on experiences of the participants and it is my interpretation and representation of the participants' New Zealand WWOOFing experience that is

presented in previous chapters. It is only now I come to realise that a girl who started her PhD journey in yellow gumboots and 20 kg of LEGO in her car's trunk was responsible for many accounts in this research process (Figure 35).



Figure 35. Reflexive journal entry: arrival to the farm.

As any study, this research has its limitations and I need to critically reflect on the challenges that were presented earlier in Chapter Three. When I reflect on the research process from the beginning, I account the role I played throughout and how this research project was shaped by my interests and personal development goals. During my PhD journey, I have not only explored and examined the experiences of farmers and WWOOFers but also investigated my relationship and identity as an emerging academic, wife and a new mother. This research project also provided me with the opportunities to experience academic environments at the University of Glasgow in Scotland and the University of Kathmandu in Nepal. I also had a chance to live through the meaningful experience as a WWOOF volunteer in Scotland and Nepal. As a WWOOFer, I definitely experienced several critical incidents, which had a transformational effect on my personality.

The intention of this research is to contribute to the understanding of the social construction of the volunteer tourism exchange programme, WWOOF, and the existing methodology used in tourism studies. My understandings of the WWOOFing experience are influenced by my intention to contribute to the field

of tourism studies. These understandings are informed by insights I have gained from scholars in the critical tourism studies field and my experience as a WWOOF volunteer in three countries. In conclusion to this thesis, it is hoped that the thesis has put forward a case for understanding the socially constructed reality of this volunteer exchange programme. Further, it is hoped that the creative and innovative methodological tools applied in this study to be beneficial tools for scholarly investigation in the area of tourism.

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Appendix A

Advertising of study on WWOOF New Zealand Forum

Posted on 16.09.13 at 12:17:50 pm

Link: <https://www.woof.co.nz/community-forum/index.php?topic=1142.0>

Topic: Looking for hosts willing to share their ideals and WWOOF philosophy

Dear Hosts and WWOOFers,

Kartin from WWOOF.co.nz suggested me to make a post in the forum because I am looking for farmers, who are willing to share their ideas on WWOOF philosophy. Soon the info will come with a WWOOF newsletter.

My name is Yana and I am doing my Ph.D. Hamilton. I am keen on sustainable life principles, renewable energy, and organic farming and I dream to have my WWOOF farm in the future 😊

My research focuses on the philosophy of WWOOF and host-guest interactions. The outcome of the research will help to reduce the potential conflicts and match the desires of hosts and guests as well as benefit WWOOF network and rural communities throughout New Zealand as WWOOF could be used for community and tourism development.

The research also contributes to organic food production, which still represent a small segment worldwide (4% of total food sales in 2010). And I also hope that the organic ideals, sustainable and environmental values within the network will help to promote the green image of New Zealand and its care for the environment on the global scale.

To achieve this, I would like to come to your farm and wwoof there myself, I would like to interview you as a host and WWOOFers (if any are on site). All information will remain confidentially (I have already gained the 'ethics' approval from the Uni). I could come over to your farm any time from October 2013 to April 2014.

If you are interested in the proposed research or want more information, please contact me via email or WWOOF Profile (Member ID: 66938).

Thanks for the support, Yana

Appendix B

Advertising of the study in the WWOOF New Zealand newsletter

Newsletter - September 27, 2013

Link: <http://www.woof.co.nz/office-news/newsletter-september-2013/>

Topic: Research project



Yana is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Waikato in Hamilton. She has a background in higher education, business management, and tourism. She is interested in sustainable life principles, renewable energy, and organic farming. She came to New Zealand in October 2012 to start her Ph.D. under the supervision of Professor Alison McIntosh at the University of Waikato. The main area of her research is about the WWOOF phenomenon. She is also a WWOOFer, if you are interested in hosting her and assisting her with her project, this is her profile id 66938. We do realise that this is an extremely busy time for hosts, but a lot of research projects can be very useful in the future. So if you think you can assist her with her research whilst she is WWOOFing with you – please do get in touch with her!

Appendix C

Participant information sheet – for WWOOF hosts

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa



RESEARCH TOPIC:

Communication of ideals, narratives, and discourses in alternative volunteer exchange programmes. An examination of WWOOF farms in New Zealand

Dear WWOOF host,

I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Waikato Management School. I am writing a dissertation with the research focus on ideas, narratives and discourses within the WWOOF setting in New Zealand.

Overview of the project

The objectives of my research are:

- to examine the narratives and relational dialectics of and between WWOOF hosts and guests, and
- to critically explore the discourses of WWOOFing values and philosophy that socially construct this type of tourism.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research, which will take place in September 2013 – April 2014, at any convenient time to you. I will be asking you about views, opinions, and experiences regarding your understanding of WWOOF as well as the relationships with WWOOFers.

Please note: If there is more than one host I would like to interview all of you together. What will this involve?

I would like to spend 1-5 days with you on your farm, so I can get to know you and learn more about everyday life on your farm and what a WWOOFing visit would involve. As a part of this, I would like to interview you for about an hour. I will audio record the interviews. During my visit, I will keep a research diary to write down any observations I make with regards to your daily routine, your relationship with WWOOFers staying at your farm during the time of research, as well as your tasks and responsibilities.

If during my time on your farm you would have any WWOOFers I would like to ask them to participate in the research too. They will be asked to participate in the interviews too.

In addition, I will offer you and your guests to participate in the creative workshop, framed by LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) concept, to explain the WWOOF phenomenon using creative methods. LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® concept is an innovative facilitated meeting, communication, and problem-solving method, where participants are led by facilitator through a series of questions in order to build a 3D model using LEGO bricks. Each participant builds his or her own three-dimensional LEGO model in response to the facilitator's questions using specially selected LEGO bricks. These 3D models serve as the basis for group discussion, knowledge sharing, problem-solving and decision-making. The workshops will be video recorded. More information will be provided before the workshop.

How will you be affected by participating in this project?

- The participation is entirely voluntary.
- I will conduct the interview and LSP workshop by myself. I will record it with a portable recording device and take notes. If you wish I will provide you with a transcript of the interview, as well as the summary of my research after the completion of the dissertation in December 2015.

- All given information as well as your identity will be entirely confidential. Your name and address will not be revealed to anyone or appear in any text.
- Please notify me, if you will wish to withdraw from the participation in the research until the 1st of August 2014, when the data analysis process will start

What will the data be used for?

The data will contribute to my doctoral dissertation, which will be deposited in the University of Waikato Library for public access; moreover, findings might be presented at conferences or published in academic journals.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the proposed research has been granted by the University of Waikato Ethics Committee. Before the participation in the interview, I will provide you with a Consent Form, which will inform you about your rights and gives you the opportunity to state how the data collected from you should be handled.

Thank you for your time and help to make this research possible. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Alison McIntosh.

I look forward to meeting you in person.

Thank you very much.

Kind regards,

Yana Wengel

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Appendix D

Participant information sheet – for volunteer tourists (WWOOFers)

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa



RESEARCH TOPIC:

Communication of ideals, narratives, and discourses in alternative volunteer exchange programmes. An examination of WWOOF farms in New Zealand

Dear WWOOFer,

I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Waikato Management School. I am writing a dissertation with the research focus on ideas, narratives and discourses within the WWOOF setting in New Zealand.

Overview of the project

The objectives of my research are:

- to examine the narratives and relational dialectics of and between WWOOF hosts and guests, and
- to critically explore the discourses of WWOOFing values and philosophy that socially construct this type of tourism.

During your stay on the farm, I would like to invite you to participate in this research at any convenient time to you. I would like to interview you and ask questions you about views, opinions, and experiences regarding your understanding of WWOOF as well as the relationships with WWOOF hosts.

What will this involve?

Our meeting will involve a one hour interview, which will take place in September 2013 – April 2014 at any convenient time to you. I will audio record the interviews.

In addition, I will offer you and your WWOOF host to participate in the creative workshop, framed by LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) concept, to explain the WWOOF phenomenon using creative methods. LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® concept is an innovative facilitated meeting, communication, and problem-solving method, where participants are led by facilitator through a series of questions in order to build a 3D model using LEGO bricks. Each participant builds his or her own three-dimensional LEGO model in response to the facilitator's questions using specially selected LEGO bricks. These 3D models serve as the basis for group discussion, knowledge sharing, problem-solving and decision-making. The workshops will be video recorded. More information will be provided before the workshop.

How will you be affected by participating in this project?

The participation is entirely voluntary.

I will conduct the interview and LSP workshops by myself. I will record it with a portable recording device and take notes. If you wish I will provide you with a transcript of the interview, as well as the summary of my research after the completion of the dissertation in December 2015.

All given information as well as your identity will be entirely confidential. Your name and address will not be revealed to anyone or appear in any text.

Please notify me, if you will wish to withdraw from the participation in the research until the 1st of August 2014, when the data analysis process will start

What will the data be used for?

The data will contribute to my doctoral dissertation, which will be deposited in the University of Waikato Library for public access; moreover, findings might be presented at conferences or published in academic journals.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the proposed research has been granted by the University of Waikato Ethics Committee. Before the participation in the interview, I will provide you with a Consent Form, which will inform you about your rights and gives you the opportunity to state how the data collected from you should be handled.

Thank you for your time and help to make this research possible. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Professor Alison McIntosh. I look forward to meeting you in person.

Thank you very much.

Kind regards,

Yana Wengel

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Appendix E

Interview guide for themed interviews - for hosts and volunteer tourists (WWOOFers)

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa



RESEARCH TOPIC:

Communication of ideals, narratives, and discourses in alternative volunteer exchange programmes. An examination of WWOOF farms in New Zealand

The in-depth interviews will be held according to four main themes presented below. The researcher will be asking participants to share their ideas, values and beliefs about the WWOOF phenomenon.

Section 1: Participant(s) background

Section 2: Expectations and relationships

Section 3: Overall experience

Section 4: Final thoughts

Appendix F

Description of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® concept - for hosts and volunteer tourists (WWOOFers)

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa



LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) was invented in 2001 by the grandchild of LEGO founder, Kirk Kristiansen, in a collaboration with Professor Victor and Professor Roos, who used 'playing' as a consultancy approach which is aimed to improve the business of the organisations (Gauntlett, 2007).

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® aimed to develop creative thinking through team building metaphors of the individual identities and experiences using LEGO bricks. Generally, the method is used to improve the organisational performance in the business context; in 2009 the method was further developed for use in higher education as a tool for teaching & learning, research, and ideation (Nolan, 2010).

LSP is a workshop, where a facilitator asks the participants different questions related to the project, task or strategy. The participants use LEGO bricks to build metaphorical models in order to ask the question; further, the participants explain each other the idea behind the model they have built. A vital part of the LSP workshops is the non-judgemental, free-thinking and playful interaction between the participants (Gauntlett, 2007).

The workshop consists of four parts:

- Introduction
- Individual Models
- Shared Models
- Reflection

The introduction part is aimed to make the participants familiar with LEGO, few key elements of 'hands-mind' connection and the implementation of symbols and metaphors in the construction process. The second part is related to the project theme; during this part, participants are asked to build individual models and later to present and explain them to each other. The following section is aimed to connect different models of the participants into a joint model, with shared ideas. The last part of the workshop is the reflection and the summary of the workshop, where participants share their ideas, experience and future outlook (LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®, 2006).

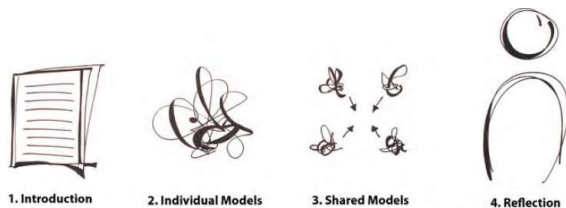


Figure 1: The four parts of LSP workshop (Nielsen, 2009). Used with permission.

Appendix G

Consent Form for hosts and volunteer tourists (WWOOFers)

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa



RESEARCH TOPIC:

Communication of ideals, narratives, and discourses in alternative volunteer exchange programmes. An examination of WWOOF farms in New Zealand

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Participant Information Sheet** form.

Feedback distribution:

I would like (please tick box as required)

- The transcript of this interview
- A summary of the research results

I would like to receive it (please tick box as required)

- By mail (please provide the address)
Street, Number _____
Zip code, City _____
Country _____
- By email (please provide the email address)

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:

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Appendix H

Extracts from the research journal

15.11.13

1

Yesterday I popped into Alison's office to show her & Cheryl the pictures which will 'open the interviews'. After that we had a chat of what is important for the reflexivity, anthropological & ethnographic research. A few things I need to mention about my preparation for the field work.

About a month ago I've ordered nice rubber boots for farming, as I read on the forum of WWOOF.NZ that those might be useful. My boots are yellow, so are my rubber hand gloves => Yana is going to be a 'Barbie WWOOFer'!

Last week I mentioned to other PhD's that I'm going to work on farms around NZ, so I won't only have a nice 'holidays' & experience of the country, but also do farm work, with which I have almost no experience for now.

A6355 02-10



So, during that coffee break Vijay from North of India taught me how to milk the cow.



Apart of buying the yellow boots, I've made a present for hosts. Through my data collection I'll travel down south from Hamilton, do couchsurfing & WWOOFing. Thus as CS'er & Russian I've prepared hand-made 100% NZ waxes ~~etc~~ candles. I got waxes from the farmers market, melted it down & pour them into toilet paper rolls :) Now I've couple of nice candles, as candle symbolizes for me 'light', 'warmth', 'home' & 'hope'. Travelers seek the light of the shelter & I want my WWOOF hosts to have this light for me & others coming in the future.

A6355 02-10



I bet Kames would envy me if he saw where I am
about to have a dinner (w) NZ scenery is stunning and
it's amazing to have free time to capture it
in this way





May 2014

I am back to the desk. Some important things are standing out since I have started data transcription.

Education: Thinking of what people have mentioned in the majority of interviews I could label it as 'education' (teaching and learning) for now. For farmers, it is quite important to teach WWOOFers about organic farming. They feel that WWOOFers' interest & motivation are significant for the 'win-win' exchange. All of it seems to play an important role in the construction of the experience.

Security: Not a major factor, but mentioned by three hosts "importance of security". One host mentioned that it is impossible to track a WWOOFer as many give a 'fake' or backpackers address when signing up for WWOOF. Another host told stories of a WWOOF farmer who was 'kicked out of WWOOFing' for sexual interest towards WWOOFers; he was reported by a WWOOFer. A male host mentioned feeling uncomfortable when young female WWOOFers made intimate proposals to him. But these events have no evidence in my experience on the farms. From WWOOFers side people said they are not always sure how true the description of the host & his property is. Hence, these issues relate to an underlying value of WWOOFing 'trust.'

Dirt: WWOOF New Zealand network administrator said that they ask hosts to provide decent clean accommodation for WWOOFers. But what is clean and how to measure it! I have slept in a nice bed in the house, on old mattress & incredibly old pillow with stains, employees flat with the pretty good standard as well as intent & on a dirty couch with rat inspecting the kitchen at night. The place with rat was pretty much my personal limit. It was way far from being 'clean.' But what a WWOOFer could do if the hosts just live like this!?

September 2014

I am almost at the end of doing my coding. There are a few things which come up and relate to the previous research on WWOOF. But there are also a few other things like 'dirt', 'food ideals' and 'accountability'. Quite a lot of info on how important the food is. People also mentioned that WWOOFing is a meaningful way of travel as they are able to meet the locals and get back to the community; in this way, they do not feel like 'mass tourists' since they have more interactions with people, nature and animals. As a WWOOFer myself, I completely get it.

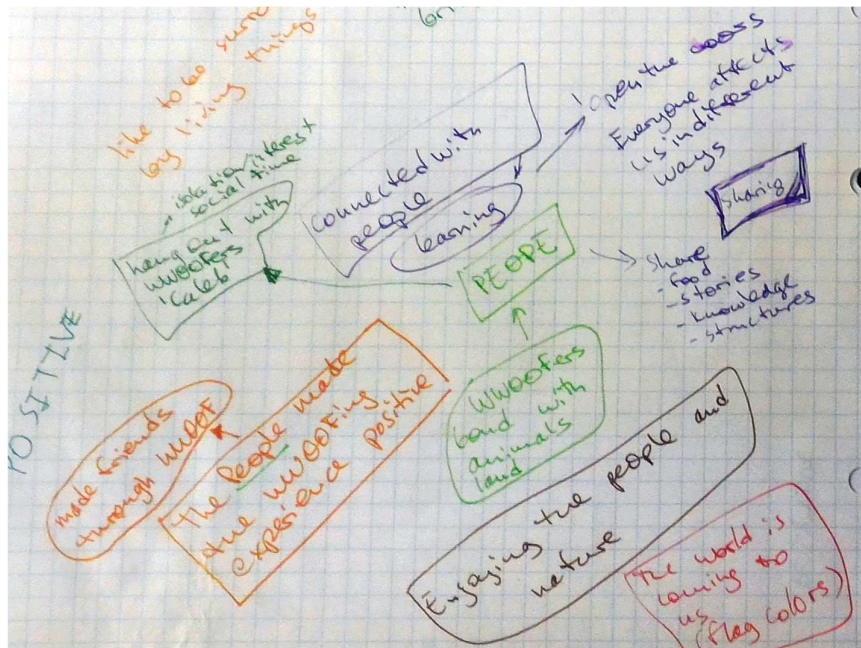
Appendix I

Notes for the thematic analysis process

An example of the Word Cloud generated for the analysis of the LSP workshops.



Notes and mind maps used for the analysis of the LSP workshops.



NEGATIVE

When people don't engage in what we do "like" → people leaving "door" "Calle"

"we open our life and house to these people and they are not connecting - full"

Affect expectations wants

Lack of communication

- language
- not saying need/wants
- say nothing when they don't understand

in cultures "Charlotte"

IDEAL

Ambassador

break between worlds

benefit through exchange

people coming together

travel is not possible

"I am seeing your world through your experiences"

Many → "Idea of coming to see the world, showing interest in my world. And sharing my produce from the garden."

an ideal working experience includes

spiritual garden is important element of experience

stay where it was

let things in or out

gating

Sharing → food changing out → rules → work learning - teaching

"people pleased to have around" can have low skills but other way around is difficult

Linker

This is what is what it's ideal - CSP

My shift